

DN disabilitynow

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PIN pad shut-out

The Post Office has admitted introducing cash machines that will be inaccessible to hundreds of thousands of disabled people because it feared losing customers if the project was delayed.

PIN pads are being introduced because the government's new benefits system will see giro cheques and benefit books gradually replaced by direct payments into bank accounts.

As many as 15 million people collect a benefit every week in a post office, although it is not known how many of them are disabled.

Under the government's new benefits system, which starts rolling out across the UK from next month, claimants will be able to draw their money from ordinary bank accounts, new basic bank accounts, or new Post Office (PO) card accounts. Everyone will have their benefits paid this way by 2005.

But the Royal National Institute of the Blind has accused the PO of ignoring its concerns about the design of the PIN pads.

It says they are "too small and badly designed" for blind and partially sighted people.

It has received hundreds of calls from visually impaired people who have already come across some of the 38,000 PIN pads the PO is installing in its 17,500 branches.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC), which was consulted over the new PIN pads, said they would breach part three of the Disability Discrimination Act if they weren't altered.

A DRC spokesman said: "What we have been saying is that the equipment and the proposed new accounts are not offered on an equal basis because of these problems."

The PO said the government

only told them they would have to introduce the new pads less than two years ago.

A PO spokeswoman said: "The only PIN pads available in the timescale were the ones we have gone with."

Graham Halliday, the PO's banking and financial services director, added: "If we didn't go live with the banking service in 2003, we would potentially start to lose customers."

He admitted that both the RNIB and wheelchair user groups had raised concerns.

The PO has commissioned a report to examine the problems and look for alternatives.

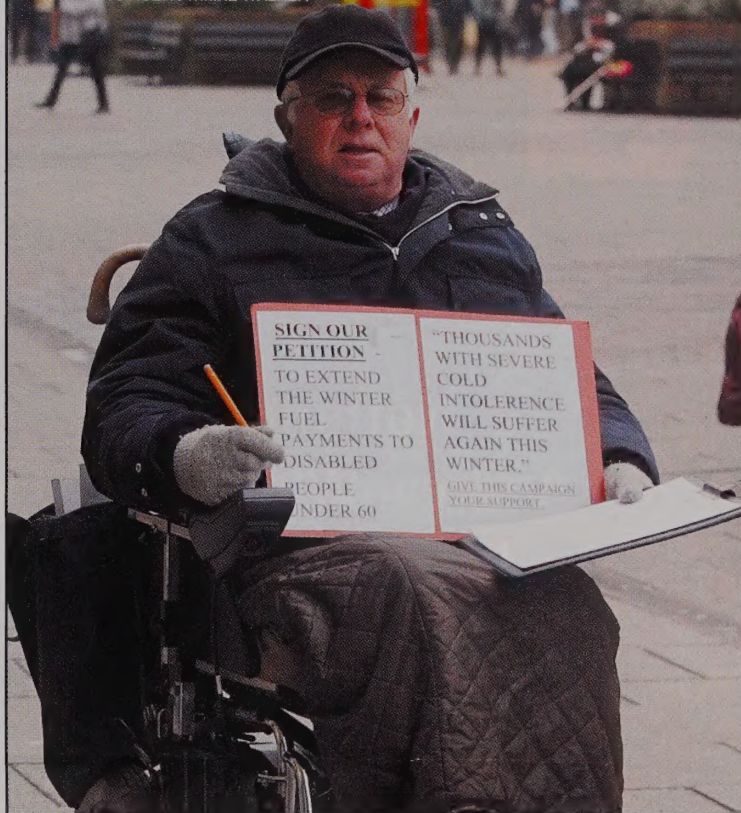
But Halliday refused to criticise the government over the "tight timescale".

A Department for Work and Pensions spokeswoman refused to comment when asked whether the government was responsible for the problems because of the tight timescale.

DN CAMPAIGN



M AND Y NEWS AGENCY/MIKE WALKER



SIGN UP: Portsmouth campaigner Clive Garnett has collected over 1,100 signatures for DN's Winter Fuel campaign. Garnett said: "I'm well over sixty, but I believe people who have a low tolerance to the cold are going to suffer whatever age they are. Other people must feel very strongly about it too. The response has been amazing."

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DN CAMPAIGN



Airlines' excuses

DN EXCLUSIVE BY **LUCY GLYNN
AND JOHN PRING**

Airlines are hiding behind a 70-year-old international trade agreement, so as to reduce the compensation they pay passengers whose wheelchairs they have damaged or lost.

Since the launch of our Flight Rights campaign, airlines have been saying they are bound by the Warsaw Convention (WC) in deciding compensation.

The rate – the same as for damaged baggage – is calculated at £14.82 per kilo, with a maximum of 20 kilos (£296.40), even though electric wheelchairs cost thousands of pounds.

But European Union airlines have already waived the Warsaw

Convention limits on damage for death or personal injury.

And some airlines have admitted that they occasionally pay above these standard rates.

A spokesman for Britannia Airlines said compensation was "limited" by the convention, but denied it was hiding behind the agreement.

He said passengers should take out their own insurance, but he couldn't say why airlines should not meet this cost.

An Easyjet spokeswoman also confirmed that it used the guidelines, although they occasionally made "goodwill gestures" above these rates.

And Roger Wiltshire, secretary general of the British Air

Transport Association, said: "I do not think it is unacceptable because those are the guidelines for the industry at the moment."

Meanwhile, Phil Friend, who launched Flight Rights with DN, has criticised government plans to improve air travel for disabled people as "toothless".

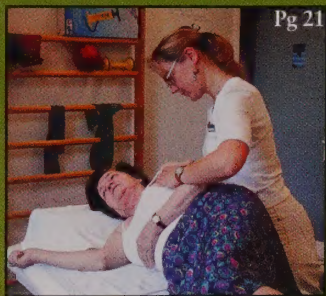
DN can reveal that the Department for Transport's (DfT) voluntary code of practice on air travel, due to be published shortly, recommends that airport staff receive training in handling wheelchairs and suggests wheelchairs are packed in protective wrapping and loaded last.

It is thought the government will look at reactions to the proposals over the next 18 months and will make the code statutory if progress isn't made.

Ann Frye, head of the mobility and inclusion unit at the DfT, has agreed to meet Labour MP Anne Begg, DN editor Mary Wilkinson and Phil Friend to discuss the code in April.

On the cover: *Discovering Charles*, Barbara Evripidou's picture of Charles Boreham, who has Down's syndrome, was a winner of Mencap's Snap! photography competition. The photos by and of people with learning disabilities are at London's Victoria and Albert Museum until 13 March. See also page 3.

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disabilitynow

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Expelled for pain

DN EXCLUSIVE BY NUALA CALVI

A disabled woman was thrown off her college counselling course for being in too much pain.

Patricia Bender, who has spinal problems and uses a wheelchair, was told by Harrow College in Middlesex that her pain was putting other students on the diploma course off their work.

After the Disability Law Service contacted the college on her behalf, Bender was told she could rejoin the course but would be "closely monitored".

She says tutors have not explained how she will be monitored and she remains in fear of being kicked off again.

She told DN: "They gave me no warnings of their concerns. I received a letter out of the blue calling me to a tutorial. They wouldn't discuss it; they just told me what they'd decided."

"They were saying 'you will not be consistent because of your pain. It's impacting on other members of the group and is stopping them from giving you constructive feedback.'"

"There are times I'm in pain,

but I'm very discreet. My attendance was fine. My assessments had all been good and in on time. None of the tutors had discussed any concerns with me."

"On my last day, they told the students what was happening and their mouths just dropped open – none of them had raised any concerns or even been asked about it."

Harrow College said it was unable to comment on matters relating to individual students but was carrying out an internal investigation into its student support services.



Snapped!: Steve Faber, who has a learning disability, won the Fujifilm Picture Your Life award in Mencap's Snap! competition for this photograph of his friend Adrian Shirwood. See also page 1.

DIY 'danger'

A disabled woman has been handed a nationwide ban from a DIY chain because of allegations of "reckless" driving in her motorised scooter.

Sue Hanbury, from Dorset, who has multiple sclerosis and cannot walk, was told B&Q could take her to court if she enters any of its stores again.

The DIY giant said she presented a danger because of the "speed and dangerous way" she drove her Rascal scooter in its Poole store. It even claimed she deliberately drove into one of its employees.

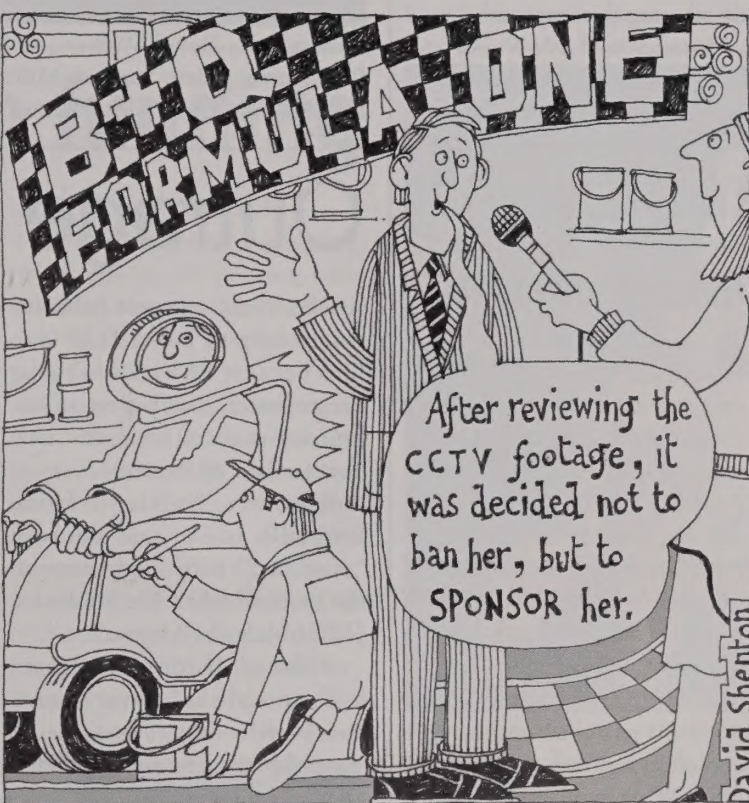
Hanbury said B&Q's behaviour was "disgusting". "I'm sure if I had knocked down a

member of staff, they would have told me."

"I'm very careful. I've been stuck in this scooter for 12 years, so I should know what I'm doing."

A B&Q spokeswoman said Hanbury had previously been issued with a verbal warning and had been banned because of her "careless driving and behaviour, on more than one occasion", all of which Hanbury denies.

She came forward after reading in last month's DN how a disabled man with incontinence who urinated in a paint kettle because B&Q wouldn't let him use its toilet, was arrested and charged with criminal damage.



DN CAMPAIGN

Councillor's crackdown

A Peterborough councillor is prepared to spy on suspected blue badge fraudsters as part of a one-man crusade against disabled parking bay abuse.

Conservative council leader Neville Sanders says he will sit outside the homes of people who have been the subject of complaints about blue badge abuse and take photographs as evidence. He claims traffic wardens fail to catch offenders, and told DN: "I'm on the warpath."

Disabled people from Peterborough said the abuse of parking spaces was a problem, but that they were "extremely worried" about Sanders' methods.

Doreen Murrey, of Peterborough Council for the Disabled, said: "I think he is going one step too far. People ring up and complain for all kinds of stupid reasons. They're not medically qualified to find out if a person is disabled or not. I don't want to see disabled people hounded."

Meanwhile, Tower Hamlets Council in London has increased the number of prosecutions of blue badge fraudsters after employing more officers.

Five people have been successfully prosecuted this year, including two doctors and a man seen sprinting across a station car park to his car.

DN will announce the results of the Baywatch supermarket survey next month.

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MOBILITY MATTERS NETWORK

Service scandal

Two disabled holidaymakers were left for an hour and a half on a "freezing" walkway at Stansted airport while they waited for wheelchair assistance.

Frieda Nolan and her husband Mike, who are both unable to walk more than a short distance, had already been left to sit on the floor for two hours at Faro airport in Portugal waiting for assistance, despite informing Monarch Airlines three days in advance of their needs.

Once on the flight, they asked the pilot to radio ahead to airport services to make sure wheelchairs would be waiting at Stansted, but found themselves in the same situation.

"We waited until the other passengers had left, but no wheelchairs came," Nolan said. "Someone finally came with a wheelchair but said she wouldn't push it and just left it there."

"We had to get off because

they were cleaning the plane and just waited on the skywalk. It was midnight and freezing cold. It was the most horrendous experience."

"Finally, a man arrived with another wheelchair and had to push both of us single-handedly because he said he was the only one on duty."

Nolan complained to Monarch, who said the service was provided by a third party.

She contacted Stansted airport, who forwarded her complaint to its wheelchair services company, Pace, which replied that it had not been notified by Monarch Airlines in time and accused the airline of "continually blaming third parties".

Monarch told DN Nolan had been put through to the wrong person about her requirements.

"Everybody's passing the buck," Nolan said. "The service is unbelievable."

In brief

Cross hits the pole

Will Cross (DN, February) became the first person with diabetes to reach the South Pole on 17 January.

He was joined by his father, Mike Cross, who also has type 1 diabetes, for the final part of the trek.

Scientists have monitored the effects of the extreme climate on their bodies.

Hearing aid uplift

The government said it was investing £94m over two years to complete the modernisation of hearing aid services across England (DN, January). By 2005, all audiology departments should be routinely fitting digital hearing aids.

The Scottish Executive also pledged £10m over four years to implement recommendations of a report on improving audiology services.



Fitness first: David Walker (centre), 14, joined Premiership football stars from Newcastle United and Paralympic athlete Stephen Miller (left) at the launch of the Inclusive Fitness Initiative at Waterworld in Prudhoe, one of 30 pilot schemes aimed at improving fitness opportunities for disabled people in England.

Outrage over £120 taxi fare

A wheelchair user was told she would have to pay a £120 taxi fare because she couldn't use the transfer coach that takes holiday-makers from the airport to their apartments.

Kirsten Battle, from Rothwell, Leeds, said she was "disgusted" with the treatment she received when she booked a JMC holiday to Majorca.

Although Battle's wheelchair folds up and she can get onto a coach with help, she said: "I was told 'invalids are no longer allowed on travel coaches'."

JMC only offered Battle and her partner a £5 discount each for the holiday they are taking in May.

She said: "It's discrimination. How many people haven't been told they are not allowed on the coach, then they turn up and have to pay £120 for a taxi?"

Battle was also told she could not attend any of the organised trips or hire a car because of the risk of damage.

A JMC spokeswoman accepted Battle was told that "luggage has to take priority

over wheelchairs" if the coach is full and that the JMC assistant "explained the situation extremely insensitively".

But she said collapsible wheelchairs should be allowed on coaches, although the coach company refused to take electric wheelchairs.

She said there would be "certain restrictions" on some excursions and wheelchair-accessible cars were "subject to availability".

JMC has agreed to pay Battle's taxi fare.

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DN disabilitynow

Employment Supplement

April 2003

The April issue will carry our annual employment supplement, "Wise up to Work", which offers information and experiences to help disabled people get into work and stay in work. There will be articles on starting your own business, getting a job through Jobcentre Plus, making a career switch, and how the Disability Rights Commission and the Disability Discrimination Act can help you. A Minister will be giving a progress report on the "The New Deal for Disabled People". Someone in a high profile position will write about "My Job", and there will be a survey of employers and articles on part time working and how to deal with employment problems involving tribunals and trade unions.

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Grant upgrade

The government has announced an increase of £11m in next year's Disabled Facilities Grant.

The increase brings the budget for the grants, available through local authorities for adapting homes, to £99m.

Liz Silver of RADAR said the increase was welcome, but "still just a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed".

The announcement came as the problems faced by disabled people in accessing grants for basic facilities, such as accessible showers, were highlighted in a House of Commons debate.

MP Helen Jackson said many disabled people did not know how to apply for grants and those that did were waiting an unacceptable length of time for their application to be processed – some for up to three years.

The government said it was working to produce new guidance to authorities on delivering adaptations services.

New Deal under fire

Government work programmes for disabled people are excluding those who need the most help, major charities have told MPs.

Schemes such as the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) are underfunded and set "completely unrealistic" targets, according to evidence given at a parliamentary inquiry into Labour's disabled employment record.

Learning disability charity Mencap said New Deal advisors were too results-focussed and considered people with a learning disability "hard to place" clients. The most severely disabled people were excluded by

the requirement to work 30 hours a week in order to be part of the scheme.

"The commitment within Valuing People to ensure that the NDDP reaches people with learning disabilities has not been met," it said.

"New Deal job brokers have refused Mencap's offers of learning disability awareness training and job coach support, as it was felt that this not a wise use of resources," it added.

The Royal National Institute of the Blind said the NDDP was aimed at those closest to job-readiness, with not enough funding available to provide the

additional support needed by blind and partially sighted people in order to compete on a "level playing field".

Lorna Reith, of Disability Alliance, said the scheme set "incredibly overambitious targets" and did not reward qualitative factors such as skill development.

The comments came as final results of pilots of the ONE employment programme, which aimed to provide a joined-up benefits and work placement service through compulsory interviews for disabled people, showed the scheme had failed to improve job prospects for participants.

Every vote counts

Disability organisations have welcomed a review* of the electoral system which should make it easier for people with disabilities to vote.

Elections watchdog the Electoral Commission is consulting on how voting can be made more accessible.

After the last General Election, the Polls Apart campaign – headed by Scope, Capability Scotland and the Disability Rights Commission – showed that almost seven in ten polling stations had access problems.

The commission now wants to hear disabled people's voting experiences and will look at how both buildings and ballot

papers can be made more accessible. One idea is to make ballot papers available in an audio version or in Braille.

Ruth Scott, campaigns officer for Scope, welcomed the consultation and said: "Taking part in an election is one of the most fundamental expressions of citizenship within a democracy, yet many disabled people continue to be denied equal access to our democratic system."

A spokeswoman for RADAR added: "It is part of every citizen's right to access a polling station."

* www.electoralcommission.org.uk/templates/search/document.cfm/6864

Second thoughts on funding

A local government body has agreed to reconsider plans to scrap funding of the UK's leading disabled people's theatre company.

Graeae was set to be turned down by the Association for London Government (ALG) despite new funding priorities promising to put disabled people at the top of the agenda.

The news came as the company was helping the government to launch the European Year of Disabled People.

But following a campaign by

50 key London arts organisations working in the field of social inclusion, the grants committee last month deferred its decision on arts grants.

Roger Nelson, executive producer of Graeae, which is run by disabled theatre practitioners and trains disabled actors, said the result was good news but still only put the company on the list of "maybes".

"It does suggest that lobbying hard has had an impact. Because of all the fuss, they're going to have to look at this

decision again," he said.

"No other theatre company in the country is making professional touring theatre delivered by disabled people on the scale Graeae does."

Councillor Raj Chandarana, chair of the ALG grants committee, said: "To ensure we make the right decisions and fund the services that will bring the most benefit to Londoners, we need to take into account all of the issues, including the information that has been put forward by a number of groups."



Red alert: Caroline Parker (left), Lisa Hammond and Sophie Partridge (right) from Graeae, performing at the London launch of the European Year of Disabled People.



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Learning disability a 'lower priority'

A government minister admitted that protecting children from abuse is more important than safeguarding adults with learning disabilities.

Home Office minister Lord Falconer was defending the government's decision to delay Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on staff in adult care homes and from domiciliary care agencies.

The government also postponed the introduction of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List, designed to stop suspected abusers finding new care jobs.

Falconer admitted to BBC2's *Newsnight* that CRB checks on people working with children were a higher priority than those on staff working with learning disabled adults.

David Congdon, Mencap's head of external relations, said: "It didn't surprise me, because we have felt for a long time that learning disability is not seen as a priority."

A Home Office spokeswoman said the government had to make some "difficult decisions" because of CRB delays, and wanted to introduce

the checks as soon as possible.

Falconer was speaking as the government published a new sexual offences bill, containing three new offences aimed at protecting "vulnerable people".

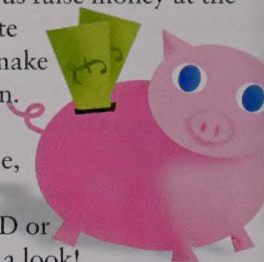
Congdon welcomed the bill, but said the maximum seven-year sentence for sexual activity with a learning disabled or "mentally disordered" resident by a staff member was much too low. He said this offence would probably lead to the most criminal convictions of the three.

The Home Office has agreed to look again at this issue.

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Hepatitis pressure

The UK government is under renewed pressure to compensate people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C by NHS blood products, after the Scottish Executive announced its own compensation scheme.

Scottish health minister Malcolm Chisholm said each infected person would be paid £20,000, plus another £25,000 if the disease had caused serious health problems.

But the scheme will only go ahead if Westminster agrees not to claw back the money by cutting benefits, and says the scheme would not over-reach Scottish Executive powers.

More than 2,800 people with

haemophilia in the UK are living with the condition after infection in the 1970s and 1980s.

Karin Pappenheim, chief executive of the Haemophilia Society, welcomed the news, but said the payments should be more generous. She said it would be "intolerable" if the government did not extend payments to the rest of the UK.

But a Department of Health spokesman said it had no "legal liability" and its position had not changed. "As soon as the technology became available to make blood products free from hepatitis C, the NHS introduced it."

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In brief

Helpline cash

The government is spending £500,000 a year for three years supporting Contact a Family's free helpline* for families with disabled children. Health minister Jacqui Smith also launched the new edition of the charity's directory of conditions and support groups.**

* Tel: 0808 808 3555.

** www.cafamily.org.uk, or tel: 020 7608 8740 for details of the printed or CD ROM versions.

Rough guide to FE

Disabled young people have set up a website providing an unofficial guide to further education colleges.

The site lets disabled and non-disabled students post the good and bad points about colleges and their facilities.

www.aroughguidetofe.org.uk



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DN MAGIC: DN marketing manager Judith Reid (left) is handed the keys to a Ford Fusion by Ford brand manager Usha Raghavachari. Ford is lending the car to DN for a year. To contact Ford's free MAGIC mobility helpline, tel: 0800 240241, minicom: 0800 169 3049.

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In a spin: John Battle MP (right) visited a Leeds Remploy project that trains disabled people to refurbish fridges and washing machines. He was joined by (l to r) Remploy worker Craig Potter, Renew Trust head Colin Crooks and Remploy manager David Liddle.

Bill must go further

Charities have welcomed the government's announcement of a new draft disability bill later this year, being trumpeted as the "biggest extension of rights for disabled people ever seen in this country".

The bill, announced by Work and Pensions Secretary Andrew Smith, would make it illegal to refuse disabled people access to transport, and commit public bodies to actively promoting equal opportunities for disabled people.

It would also extend the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to private clubs and extend the definition of disability to people diagnosed with cancer or HIV.

But campaigners are concerned about how extensive the bill will be and called for the government to go further than the recommendations on civil rights for disabled people outlined by its Disability Rights Taskforce in 1999.

Mark Morris, of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, said: "The government has delayed implementing those recommendations for so long that there are now other issues we need to take forward."

"There are clearly lessons to be learnt about how the DDA has been implemented."

These include the difficulty of proving discrimination in provision of goods and

services and of defining what the act means by "reasonable" adjustment.

Charities would also like all discrimination cases to be heard by tribunals because they are cheaper and easier than the court system.

The Disability Rights Commission is waiting for the results of its consultation on a review of the DDA.

Caroline Ellis, of the Royal National Institute of the Blind, said it was crucial this review formed the basis of any new bill.

"The question is what is this bill going to be based on – old news or up-to-date evidence about where the law is letting us down?"

Rare debate turns audience against 'right to die' laws

A rare public debate on euthanasia sparked a dramatic rise in opposition to the introduction of new laws allowing disabled people a "right to die".

At the start of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) debate last month, the audience was slightly in favour of allowing people with some terminal conditions to be helped to die.

But by the end of the debate, following speeches by opponents of euthanasia, another vote showed the audience was strongly opposed to the move.

Agnes Fletcher, assistant director of public affairs at the DRC, told *DN*: "There appeared to be a change from the beginning to the end of the debate. Maybe that is because of the testimony of disabled people. It would be good to see the diversity of the debate in terms of per-

spectives and experiences here this evening reflected more accurately in the public domain."

The audience also voted strongly in favour of giving disabled people better protection against withholding or withdrawing medical treatment.

Fletcher had delivered a speech on behalf of DRC commissioner Jane Campbell, who said: "The campaign to assist our so-called voluntary death is dangerous, reinforces our unequal status and makes people like me feel unsafe."

Deborah Annetts, chief executive of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society, told the audience she welcomed news that Reg Crew, from Liverpool, who had motor neurone disease, had only hours before been helped to commit suicide by the Swiss charity Dignitas.



A new vision: Health Minister David Lammy (right) was joined by Royal National Institute of the Blind chairman Colin Low as he opened the charity's Low Vision Centre, a partnership with health and social services in Camden and Islington. The centre will help people who are losing their sight.

In brief

Hawking the best

Professor Stephen Hawking has been voted Britain's Greatest Disabled Person, in a BBC online poll.

The scientist and author of *A Brief History of Time*, who has motor neurone disease, came top in the poll for disability website Ouch.

Runners-up included rock star Ian Dury and Paralympic champion Tanni Grey-Thompson.

www.bbc.co.uk/ouch

DLF ambassador

Actor Leslie Phillips OBE has been appointed a vice president of the Disabled Living Foundation. Phillips is to take on an ambassadorial role for the equipment advice organisation.

Changes ahead

New guidelines for treating people with personality disorders have been proposed by the government. They include multi-disciplinary teams, day services and a network of centres dedicated to managing personality disordered criminals.

[*www.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth/personalitydisorder.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth/personalitydisorder.htm)

Ken launches new schemes for disabled Londoners

Campaigners have welcomed two major new initiatives in London, launched by London Mayor Ken Livingstone last month.

Disability Capital aims to highlight the experience of disabled Londoners and will focus on civil rights. It includes a consultation to discover major barriers to equality, and an

investigation into how far disabled people are excluded from mainstream life.

There will be a conference in December to launch a report on the consultation and research. And a scheme will be set up to ensure that disability rights are incorporated into all the Greater London Authority's (GLA) work.

Livingstone also launched the Greater London Initiative for Disabled Entrepreneurs (GLIDE), a joint venture between his London Development Agency (LDA) and the Association of Disabled Professionals.

GLIDE will offer support to help disabled people set up and develop their own businesses*.

Brenda Ellis, director of policy and projects for Greater London Action on Disability, said: "We think they are a brilliant idea. All the indications so far are that the GLA have acted and taken on board a lot of issues to do with disabled people unlike a lot of other organisations in their position."

[*www.glideonline.org](http://www.glideonline.org)



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Letter from Brussels



Europe is starting to listen to disabled people, says Richard Howitt

Now the European Year of Disabled People has been launched, attention is switching to what concrete outcomes will follow.

When government ministers from each of the European countries met in Greece in January (Greece holds the presidency of the EU at the moment), it was the first time that a representative of the European Disability Movement had been invited too.

This informal Council of Ministers appealed to businesses and trade unions to participate in awareness-raising during the year, and to combat obstacles to employment of disabled people in particular.

The countries were unanimous in supporting the mainstreaming of disability in all areas of policy, including national plans for social inclusion, which are submitted every year to EU countries.

Disabled people have a right to be consulted on Britain's plan, which is drawn up by the government here at home.

However, a pre-meeting saw the European Commissioner responsible warn against rais-

ing expectations for a new, comprehensive, non-discrimination law for disabled people at European level, which is still the principal campaign.

Nevertheless, we are in discussion with the Greek government for a new resolution that we hope the formal Council of Ministers will agree to before June. This could include giving more attention to issues that concern disabled people in the European Employment Strategy, revising the policy on social inclusion to account for disabled people's comments on national plans, and the launch of a new exchange of information and ideas on more general policies.

What we all agree is that effective enforcement of new European employment rights for disabled people, to be implemented in Britain next year, is a real test for Europe.

Meanwhile, the common thread in the official launches of the European Year which I took part in, was celebrating the achievements of disabled people. Whether we are still celebrating at the end of this year remains to be seen.

Richard Howitt MEP is president of the European Parliament All-Party Disability Group, e-mail: ep@edf-feph.org

Job worries

Remploy, Britain's largest employer of disabled people, has promised that plans to streamline its businesses will not result in job losses.

Under the plans announced last month, factories will have to specialise in their most lucrative area of business, with 11 business "streams" operating nationally.

But the British Council of Disabled People expressed concern that diversity of opportunity for disabled people would be jeopardised in what it regards as a cost-cutting exercise.

Chair Yvonne Farmer said: "Work won't be based on people's skills, it will just be put in front of them and they'll be told 'this is what you're going to do'.

"Ultimately, if you don't have the skills for that job and you don't fit into a particular niche, what happens to you? Are they going to retrain their current workforce? Are they going to relocate people who have specific skills?"

A Remploy spokesman said disabled people could only do the work that was there and that training would continue to be provided.

"Some of the traditional jobs they have done are disappearing. The aim of this is to attract more business so we can employ more disabled people," he said.

"People don't necessarily have a choice what they do at the moment anyway because a lot of our contracts are short-term."



Electric dream: Spike Breakwell (front) is planning to drive an electric wheelchair across Australia, starting in September. Breakwell, from Dunstable, is looking for sponsors* for the 2,600-mile trip in aid of Scope and Barnardo's. *wheelabout@hotmail.com

Send news to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk, fax: 020 7619 7331

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Wheelchair scheme – better service and lower prices?

The Motability Wheelchair Scheme is to change hands, under a new contract which promises lower prices for disabled people and better customer service.

The Wheelchair Partnership, a joint venture between the Enabling Partnership (EP) and Bright Futures, owners of website youreable.com, will take over from Motability Finance in May.

The hire purchase scheme, which allows people on the mobility component of higher rate Disability Living Allowance to buy scooters and powered wheelchairs, will be renamed Route2Mobility.

EP's commercial director Simon Knighton said the change would bring "noticeably lower prices" and a more accessible service, with 100 extra outlets set up in the next three years.

He promised tougher training for staff and more specialist advice for customers.

He said: "We believe we can meet disabled people's needs better than the existing providers because we are already working in the area and it is one which is consistent with our aims as a charity.

"It won't just be a small part of a business, so we will be able to devote a lot more time to getting it right."

DN will give Route2Mobility's contact details as soon as they are available.

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News review

A round-up of news in the mainstream media from the last few weeks

RNIB sheds jobs

The Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) announced that 100 staff are to be made redundant as a result of financial problems.

The charity said the cuts were necessary because it was facing a budget deficit of around £6m due to the downturn in the stock market (DN January).

Diabetes hope

Bath University scientists said they had taken the first step towards finding a cure for type 1 diabetes.

Researchers converted frogs' liver cells into insulin-producing cells using a technique called transdifferentiation. Frogs were used because their liver works in a similar way to humans.

But the charity Diabetes UK said more research was needed and warned that a cure could be ten years away.

Children 'let down'

An epilepsy charity reacted angrily to news that a Leicester paediatrician had mistakenly misdiagnosed 618 children, who he had claimed had epilepsy.

Dr Andrew Holton worked at Leicester Royal Infirmary between 1990 and 2001. A performance review found that 618 of the children he said had epilepsy did not have the condition.

But the doctor was not disciplined because the British Paediatric Neurology Association said this rate of epilepsy misdiagnosis was not unusual.

Epilepsy Action said such a rate was totally unacceptable and too many children were being let down by the poor quality of paediatric epilepsy services.

Anastasia's in

The straight A deaf student turned down by Oxford University heard she has won a place at Cambridge.

Anastasia Fedotova was awarded six grade As at A level but hit the headlines last year when she was rejected from Brasenose College (DN, October 2002). She will now read maths at Cambridge's Trinity College.

Communications call

Over 340 visually impaired people lobbied their MPs at the House of Commons in February over flaws in the Communications Bill.

The Royal National Institute of the Blind claims the bill denies full access to digital TV, radio and mobile phones.

It said the bill discriminates against disabled people because it does not require the commu-

nications watchdog OFCOM to promote accessibility, or force manufacturers to design accessible equipment.

Lib Dem peer Lord McNally said: "We are enjoying the technological and digital revolution. If that revolution is only commercially driven, it means very large numbers of our population who are visually impaired are not going to benefit."



Putting the pressure on: campaigners outside Westminster Hall

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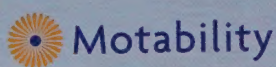
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Funds in demand IT could assist

A disability charity says the government could save the sight of thousands of people by funding studies into the use of a drug therapy.

The RNIB made the plea as it appealed a decision by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

NICE said it would only recommend photodynamic therapy (PDT) for treating the "entirely classic" form of wet age-related macular degeneration.

But the 2,500 or so people diagnosed every year with the

"predominantly classic" form of the condition will not get PDT, except through clinical studies.

The RNIB said it would force thousands of people to pay for private treatment or lose their sight.

Joe Korner, RNIB communications manager, said there was no good clinical reason for the decision and called on the government to fund studies.

A NICE spokesman said there were "still doubts" about the therapy's clinical and cost effectiveness for people with

predominantly classic AMD.

Meanwhile, new NICE guidance has been welcomed as a "step in the right direction" for people with diabetes.

NICE has recommended that insulin pumps should be available on the NHS to people with type 1 diabetes, but only if normal insulin injections fail.

Diabetes UK wants the pumps approved for all people with type 1 diabetes, but said the decision was "a step forward in making this treatment available across England and Wales".

Using computer technology to check whether children have visual impairments could improve the "patchy" levels of screening across the country, according to a disability charity.

The Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) spoke out as a government health advisory body recommended that screening should ideally take place at the age of five.

The *Health for all Children* report, published by the National Screening Committee, also recommended that screening should be carried out by orthoptists, who specialise in diagnosing and treating eye conditions.

But the RNIB said there was a national shortage of orthoptists and screening could be carried out using computer software operated by trained school staff.

Joe Korner, the charity's communications manager, said levels of screening were "very patchy", and numbers could be increased and costs cut by using the new technology.

A Department of Health spokesman said the government would be considering the points raised in the report.

He added: "The report doesn't lay down the law. The government is interested in using it as a reference point."

See *Early years*, page 16.

Second-class treatment

Health trusts are providing inadequate care to people with respiratory diseases because their conditions are not national "priorities", according to a campaigning group.

The Respiratory Alliance's (RA) study, *Bridging the Gap**, warned that primary care trusts (PCTs) were guilty of "disease discrimination" by concentrating on NHS priorities.

The report aims to help PCTs provide high quality care for people with conditions such as asthma, allergies, tuberculosis and sleep apnoea.

The RA believes the government should introduce a national service framework for

respiratory conditions, which affect eight million people in the UK.

Professor Martyn Partridge, chair of the alliance, said: "We risk seeing patients with respiratory diseases treated like second-class citizens in the NHS because their conditions, with the exception of lung cancer, are not officially classed as a priority."

A Department of Health (DoH) spokesman said the government was working with the RA to improve services.

But he said a national service framework was "not necessarily the best way" to improve care because respiratory disease was not a "homoge-

neous group of illnesses".

The study came as the British Thoracic Society and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network released new voluntary guidelines on managing asthma. They include recommendations on medication, diagnosis and self management.

The National Asthma Campaign (NAC) welcomed the guidelines and called on the government to ensure they are put into practice.

But a DoH spokesman said: "It is up to clinicians to use their clinical judgement in relation to such guidelines."

*www.asthma.org.uk/news/press68.php



Branching out: artist Nikki Johnson (left) and occupational therapist Pauline Blaydes examine a sculpture tree decorated by mental health service users and staff from Airedale General Hospital, Yorkshire. The tree was part of a community arts project.

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Waiting list worries

Campaigners and politicians have criticised a London borough where 1,000 disabled people are on a waiting list for occupational therapy assessments, with one waiting over 18 months.

Many are waiting for housing adaptations or assistive equipment or have applied to join the Taxicard subsidised taxi service.

Richard Downes, of Brent Advocacy Concerns, said it was an "absolutely appalling" situation with a "real human cost".

Liberal Democrat councillors blamed the "absolute tragedy" on social services overspending by the Labour-run council.

A Brent Council spokeswoman said numbers on the waiting-list had fallen by 400

since January 2002, but there were still 1,000 people waiting.

"If they are people in urgent need, they will be seen within 24 hours. All new referrals are only waiting 12 months."

She said the council found it difficult to recruit occupational therapy specialists, but it was "processing people more quickly" after a restructuring.



News flash: student David Thornhill and Christine Dentith, of the Royal Schools for the Deaf Manchester, use a new alarm system, funded by a £47,000 Learning and Skills Council grant.

Bill comes up short

A new bill to overhaul the system of assessing the educational needs of Scottish children is a "pale imitation" of the original proposals, say campaigners.

The draft Additional Support for Learning Bill was published by the Scottish Executive (SE) in January, promising to "modernise" the system of assessment for special educational needs.

Capability Scotland (CS) says the bill could allow councils to justify not helping severely disabled children on cost grounds, and could contravene the Disability Discrimination Act.

Kate Higgins of CS said: "There is a big risk that this bill will not make the assessment process shorter and more transparent and, most importantly, meet children's needs so they can get on with their education."

An SE spokeswoman said the plans would be "less bureaucratic" and would not "reduce provision" or give councils a "get-out clause".

Stroke plea

A charity is asking the Welsh government to set targets for the introduction of specialist stroke units in every hospital in the country.

The Stroke Association (SA) handed an 8,000-name petition to Health and Social Services Minister Jane Hutt in January.

It called for a stroke national service framework to include dedicated units in hospitals and achievable targets.

It came as Hutt announced that health services must develop strategies to manage and prevent stroke by March 2004.

Richard Thomas, assembly liaison officer for the SA, said the minister appeared "sympathetic" and they were waiting for her response to the petition.


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Ace! Stephen Evans, 17, Britain's top junior wheelchair tennis player, reached the semi-finals of the Junior Wheelchair Tennis Cup in France.

Paralympic shut out

Athletes with learning disabilities are facing an uncertain future following the International Paralympic Committee's (IPC) decision to ban them from the 2004 Paralympic Games.

The IPC said new eligibility criteria were needed to stop cheating after non-disabled athletes entered events for athletes with learning disabilities at the Sydney 2000 Paralympics.

The IPC gave the International Sports Federation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) to the end

of January to suggest a new eligibility test. But the IPC has now ruled that INAS-FID's suggested test does not meet its standards.

Geoff Smedley, chief executive of the UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA), said: "It's all grossly and totally unfair. It's a terrible situation. INAS-FID has done everything it has been asked to do. Five basketball players cheated and they ban everyone in the world."

Smedley said the 15 British Paralympic athletes with learn-

ing disabilities would be kicked off the World Class Programme, which provides funding for Paralympic athletes, and would lose their funding.

"While the international problem is something we have to deal with, my primary concern is the domestic problem."

"The swimmers won't be going to Hong Kong. Athletes are saying: 'What's the point? Why should I bother?'" he said. The IPC said it will continue to help INAS-FID develop a new eligibility system.

Disability sport needs lifeline

British disabled swimming is facing a funding crisis that could damage both Paralympic hopes and the sport at grass roots level.

Disability Sport England (DSE) has organised regional and international competitions in Britain for the last 20 years but does not have the funding to continue.

BT sponsored the programme until 2001. Last year, the charity Swimathon provided some funding, but DSE has been unable to secure further financial support.

Swimming is the highest participation sport for disabled people in Britain and the news comes only weeks after

Britain's Paralympic swimming team topped the medal table at the World Swimming Championships in Argentina.

Gordon Neale, chief executive of DSE, said: "We are in danger of losing the best swimming programme in the country. The regions have suffered already."

Neale said the competitions could continue until November, but would disappear next year without funding. DSE is now trying to find sponsors for each competition rather than the entire programme.

Neale added: "We are going out to a number of people with ideas. We are keeping our fingers crossed. We have not given up hope."



Stoke uplift

Disabled athletes are to benefit from a new multi-million pound stadium with state-of-the-art wheelchair facilities.

The national wheelchair stadium in Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, reopens this month after two years of renovations. The new stadium includes a 12-court sports hall, 25m swimming pool (*computer simulation above*), athletics track, indoor bowls arena, fitness centre and dance studio.

The improvements should see a rise in the number of disabled people using the sports facility, from 40,000 a year to 80,000.

An accessible hotel next to the stadium has also been refurbished, with dormitories being converted into twin rooms.

Martin McElhatton, chief executive of the British Wheelchair Sports Foundation (BWSF), said: "We are certainly looking forward to getting the facility back. Some athletes have had to go elsewhere or reduce their training."

"We would like to get as many Paralympic athletes training there as possible."

McElhatton said that while disabled athletes can train at other venues, there is rarely wheelchair-accessible accommodation nearby.

The BWSF hopes to organise wheelchair training camps and events at the stadium. The first event is the Open Championship Powerlifting on 8 March and this year's HSA Healthcare National Wheelchair Championships will take place 7-14 June.

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Testing time

Disabled people are still receiving unacceptable treatment in medical assessments, and being wrongfully denied essential benefits. Nuala Calvi investigates

"The doctor came in at 10am and I was in bed," says Heather Conway, who has peroneal muscular atrophy and a partially collapsed lung.

"You only have arthritis, so why are you in bed?" she said, even though I have a tube in my neck, which is clearly visible."

The doctor had come to carry out a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) assessment. But, like many others who have been assessed, Heather believes the GP ignored what she told her and failed to record the extent of her disability accurately.

doctor's report – he stated that I was capable of getting up the stairs, could bathe myself, cook and shop...I couldn't believe it."

Her benefit was eventually re-instated for life, but for nine months she had little to live on.

"The doctor wrote something down which I couldn't read and I was told to sign it or my claim would end there and then," says Ken Walters, who has spinal damage and osteo arthritis. Despite receiving DLA for two years before the assessment, he was unable to get the payments reinstated after appeal.

"The appeal doctors weren't

complaints did not lead to action against badly performing doctors, according to Dial.

A *Bitter Pill* author Lucy Birkinshaw says many of its recommendations have yet to be implemented. "There doesn't seem to be any easing off of the problems coming through," she says.

"They won't send a copy of the doctor's report to the disabled person, because they say it will take up too much money. They aren't including details of independent advice services in the initial letter.

"Apparently, Sema are now logging complaints [against specific doctors] on a new computer system, but there are cases where there are 30 complaints against an individual and nothing is being done."

Sema also does not liaise with the appeals service to keep track of doctors whose statements have been proved inaccurate at appeal, she says.

Sema disputes these claims and says it aims to investigate all complaints "appropriately".

Satisfaction levels are over 90 per cent, according to its own customer surveys.

It says that customers are told about their rights in letters and it receives feedback via the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about appeals.

Dial's report is not the first to suggest such problems are widespread. In 2000, a government select committee looked at the progress of Medical Services since its privatisation two years earlier.

It found doctors were rushing assessments, writing inaccurate reports, displaying insensitive or ignorant behaviour, and that the complaints procedure was inadequate. Despite this, Sema's contract was renewed in 2001.

The DWP says it "places great

'The doctor wrote something down which I couldn't read and was I told to sign it or my claim would end'

Her DLA was subsequently stopped.

Heather is one of many readers left high and dry while waiting for an appeal.

Following DN's story in December about doctors in Wales routinely failing people on DLA assessments, many of you have written to us with your own bad experiences.

Disability organisations are now calling for an investigation into why the system is letting disabled people down and why this has persisted for so long.

The most common complaint about Examining Medical Practitioners (EMPs), who carry out assessments, is their insensitivity and rudeness.

But in some cases, doctors have lied about assessments. "If I had been able to view the evidence the doctor had given them I could have disputed it immediately, but I was not given that opportunity," says Val Milnes, who is paraplegic.

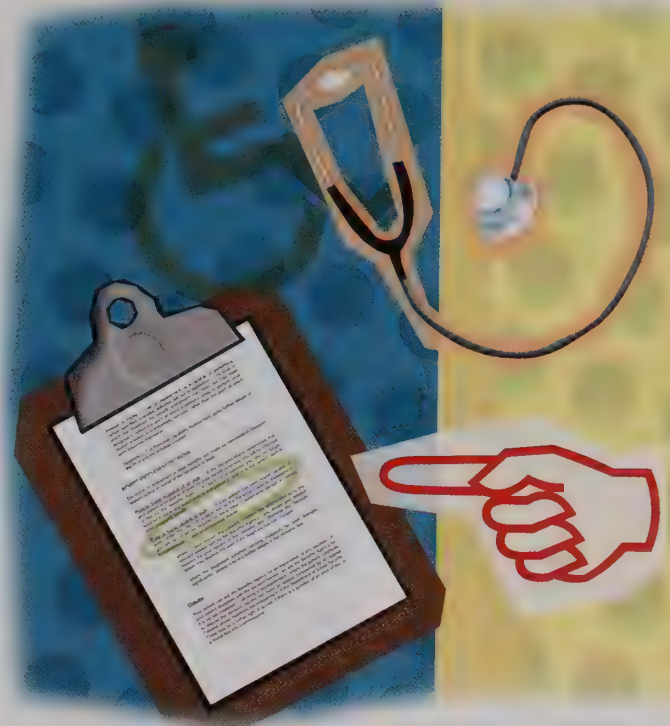
"It was not until a couple of weeks before the case was to be heard that I actually saw the

interested in my case and found my arguments amusing. I later found out that the two doctors also did [DLA] home visits."

According to Jenny Shaw, a rights support worker for national advice and advocacy charity Dial UK, Ken's experience is not unique. She says there is nothing to stop doctors with contracts for Sema, the company that runs Medical Services, from sitting on panels.

In May 2002, Dial UK produced a report on problems with medical assessment, and is campaigning for change. According to the report, *A Bitter Pill*, 69 per cent of disabled people felt they weren't given time to explain their views or condition. Doctors failed to record people's statements fully or accurately, and subsequently, many decisions were overturned on appeal.

Meanwhile, Sema showed rosy customer satisfaction statistics because disabled people were afraid to complain in case this affected their claims. Those that did, found their



emphasis on ensuring the quality of service" and points to new quality targets and incentives in the renewed contract, including minimum levels of training for EMPs.

But campaigners say there is still a lack of commitment to quality in the contract. Birkinshaw is "dubious" about the levels of customer care training and says financial penalties to safeguard standards do not affect the doctors themselves.

"Despite training, the same attitudes persist, particularly among older doctors. The idea of scroungers is quite prevalent. Until Sema takes stricter action against those doctors, I'm not sure what the solution is."

Paying doctors per visit is at odds with quality assessments, she says. This view is shared by MP Elfyn Llwyd, who told a

Commons debate in October that EMPs in his constituency routinely failed people so as to maintain this lucrative sideline. Sema refuted his claim, which the DWP is investigating.

Claire Tolliday, a welfare rights officer from Suffolk council, who represents disabled people at appeals, says the amount of work in her unit caused by poor EMP reports has doubled since privatisation.

With the current contract ending in 2005, campaigners are urging the government to thoroughly review whether ordinary doctors are the best people to be assessing the social effects of disability, and whether using a profit-making company is really working.

A Bitter Pill, £10, from Dial UK. Tel: 01302 2310123. e-mail: socialpolicy@dialuk.org.uk

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June Wolstencroft didn't think she had any reason to worry about her DLA assessment. Until the doctor walked through the door.

"He stormed in, threw his briefcase down, ordered me to turn the television off and touch my toes," she says.

"I tried my best, but it was impossible. Next, he threw me my walking stick and said 'walk'. After a few steps I had to stop due to the pain in my leg. He said: 'I said walk!'

"He asked me to sign a paper, which I gladly did, and he banged the door on his way out, leaving me totally distraught."

June (left, with her nephew Daniel) was left suicidal, and her benefits were withdrawn for eight months until an appeal reinstated them for life. Despite complaining about his behaviour, the same doctor arrived at her house for her next assessment.

Disabled people are not 'disabled'

A new study undermines the very idea of a "disabled community" with a common aim, says Michael Morgan

Disabled people don't see themselves as disabled – that's the chief finding of a study by a researcher at the department of nursing studies at the University of Edinburgh.

Entitled somewhat intriguingly, *Well, I Know This Is Going To Sound Very Strange To You, But I Don't See Myself As A Disabled Person**, Nick Watson's study examined the ambiguous nature of identity and disability, and brought up some important – if disturbing – insights into how disabled people see themselves.

What the respondents meant was not that they denied their own impairments, but that they refused to see themselves as "disabled people" in the sense usually used by disability radicals and activists – they refute the notion of a "disabled community".

Disabled solidarity is one of those things that tends to be assumed by the self-styled radicals in the disability movement, yet here is evidence



which suggests that a sense of belonging or common purpose among disabled people is largely missing. And if the "glue" is missing, then the whole edifice of disability politics and culture is structurally unsound – for all social movements are dependant on a social base of common experience, and if that's not there then neither is the movement.

I've long suspected that the

picture of a mass-based movement of radicalised disabled people is more a myth among right-on disability academics than any genuine outpouring of discontent among disabled people in any wider sense beyond Disability Living Allowance rates, the provision of blue badges and other everyday issues.

Watson's survey consisted of in-depth interviews with 14 disabled men and 14 disabled women, carried out twice over a six-month period. Two things immediately became clear. First, there is little evidence for, and plenty against, the existence of widespread social solidarity among disabled people. According to Watson, "Disabled people do not share a common religion, common political beliefs, or common social class. There are also differences along the lines of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, region, partnerships and health. All these serve to challenge the idea of the disabled community as a single, united entity".

Second, although the disabled respondents did not deny their impairment in any way, they rejected an identity based on those impairments. They do not see themselves as disabled as opposed to normal, but rather they challenge the whole idea of normality and

and this has provided the dynamic which has stimulated the growth of self-organised, politically radical disability groups.

Such common identity as does exist between disabled people may be limited to specific disability issues rather

'They refused to see themselves as "disabled people" in the sense usually used by disability radicals and activists – they refute the notion of a "disabled community"'

simply refuse to be categorised on the basis of bodily difference.

Disability is their normality – their impairments are a fact of life, not the primary determinant of their identity. Many of the respondents kept stressing that they were just an ordinary person – albeit with a disability included.

Taken together, these findings directly challenge the basis of radical disability politics – that a broad-based movement of disabled people has emerged in recent years,

than commitment to a wider programme of radical social change.

A further erosion of shared disabled experience could be a consequence of the change from institutional life to independent living in the community, the very change most central to the disability movement's list of successes.

**Disability & Society, volume 17, no. 5, 2002, pp 509-527.*

Michael Morgan is a disabled journalist who lives in Belfast.

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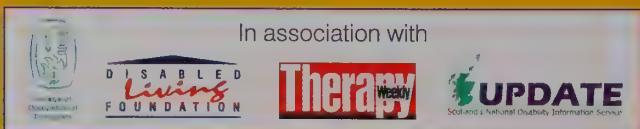
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Artist in residence: Alison and Parys together at home

Art and soul

She has just been awarded an MBE, and her art can be found in major galleries. But as Nuala Calvi found out, Alison Lapper looks to her personal life for inspiration

Alison Lapper has no idea why she was awarded an MBE. She is struggling to imagine who could have nominated her.

"I've thought about it over and over and I don't have a clue. I always thought you had to do something heroic to get an MBE."

Nevertheless, the letter has arrived on the doorstep and now the disabled artist and single mother, best known for her striking nude photographic self-portraits, is going to be meeting royalty.

She does have a few theories.

"Someone obviously has seen my artwork and decided it's got a message, that it's very political. That's how I've been seen, but I'm really not political. I do my work for me; it's a very personal journey."

Alison's work, which includes photographs of her as a living Venus de Milo, triggers questions about social perceptions of beauty and disability. But she wants to make it clear she is not jumping on the "bandwagon" of disability politics. "There are enough people doing that already, and it feels so radical to me, almost alien," she says. The award is more welcome for recognising her services to art, rather than disability art.

Meeting Alison at her home near Brighton, it is immediately obvious why she refuses to define herself through a particular movement or group – the woman oozes independence.

"I get on with my life. My

being alive is a statement in itself. My identity is first and foremost that I'm Alison, then an artist, then disabled."

It's an attitude that has got Alison through uphill struggles: from being "locked away in a school for handicapped children", to escaping to art college ten years ago, to having her own exhibitions at

prestigious galleries like the Hayward and ICA. More recently, it bolstered her decision, when facing an unplanned pregnancy, to have the baby and bring him up on her own, despite the many voices who disapproved of a woman with no arms having a child.

As Parys, now three, buzzes around her bright orange living

room carpet, Alison describes how they faced separation last year, when social services suggested he should be taken into care.

"My support package had failed. Fortunately, I had people around me to bail me out, but it was very fraught," she says. "Even now, we live very much on the edge and I feel social services are watching us."

These days, Alison has several trusted individuals around to give her the daily

"I've learned early on that you can look after children in an unconventional way. If he falls over, he picks himself up and runs to me for a kiss."

"As a baby, he learned to move himself in order to breastfeed. The midwife said it was phenomenal, but he had an instinct to help himself. It blows my mind that a young child can adapt to you in that way."

Alison criticises much of the attention she has received in the

'Bravest Mother in Britain' was one headline. It makes me heave... For God's sake, you give them a sensible story and they turn it into sap because sap sells better

help with Parys she acknowledges she needs. But having to accept outsiders regularly in her home has proved an intrusive experience.

"There can be quite a tension. We went through five *au pairs* the first year," she says.

Her vulnerability over this is reflected in Alison's recent work, particularly *Hands, No Hands*, in which a pair of disembodied, glowing arms reaches out towards the mother with no arms, at once offering help with her child and threatening to take him away.

But Alison also has a lot to say about the power of both mother and child to adapt instinctively to practical problems. She is proud of the fact that she is able to discipline Parys with her tone of voice rather than the easy option of a smack, and to tell him what to do without being able to run after him.

mainstream press as a disabled mother.

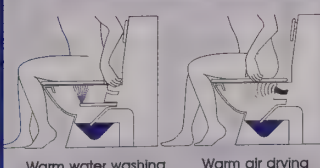
"'Bravest Mother in Britain' was one headline. It makes me heave. I'm a survivor. You can chuck anything at me and I will survive it, but I'm not brave – what the hell is brave? For God's sake, you give them a sensible story and they turn it into sap because sap sells better."

Yet, as an artist, she is acutely aware of the need to "play the game" to further her career. "It aggravates me, but at the end of the day, publicity is publicity and how else am I going to get out there as an artist?"

At the end of the day, what matters most to Alison is that the people close to her know her for who she really is. And that isn't about the awards or the headlines.

"My mates don't 'admire' me," she says, with characteristic frankness. "To them, I'm just Al."

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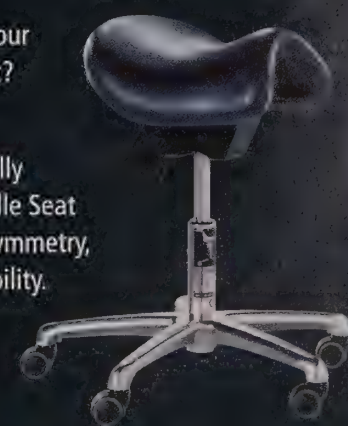
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Left in the dark

In the first of a two-part feature on early years diagnosis and care, John Pring finds families can be kept uninformed for far too long

Stephanie Middleton remembers how she was told her five-month-old daughter had cerebral palsy.

"Very worrying, very worrying," the consultant paediatrician told her. "Cerebral palsy. We will need to do some tests. Dr Y will sort these out for you today." And then he left.

"Nobody even asked us whether we knew what cerebral palsy was," says Stephanie. "We felt absolutely numb. We were just left totally alone, and we felt alone."

It was only when Stephanie's father gave her a number for the Spastics Society (now Scope) that the family, from Norwich, began to access the support they needed.

It was because of cases like this that Scope set up the Right From The Start (RFTS) consortium in 1994.

Nine years on, RFTS is about to relaunch its campaign. It urges professionals to give parents straight information about their child's diagnosis and share it with them sensitively and as early as possible.

In fact, the Departments of Health and Education are set to incorporate many RFTS recommendations into *Together From The Start*, guidance for

professionals working with very young disabled children and their families.

Rosie Rowland, RFTS's national early years adviser, says the disclosure of a diagnosis can affect how parents relate to their child and professionals, and help them develop support systems.

"Parents all say it is something they remember for the rest of their lives," she says.

But it is not only the way a diagnosis is shared that has a huge impact; it is also the length of time parents have to wait to discover the truth.

Some conditions are much easier to diagnose. Down's syndrome is usually diagnosed before birth, but parents of children with Asperger syndrome often wait years.

Andrew Powell, from the National Autistic Society's (NAS) Help! programme, which assists parents of newly diagnosed children, says:

"In one group of ten families of teenagers aged 13, 14 and 15 that we worked with, nearly all had only just been diagnosed."

"There is a lot of anger and frustration towards officials. One mum was in tears. She felt it was her fault because she didn't stick up for herself."

Some conditions can be

difficult to recognise, but delays are just as likely to be caused by doctors who do not listen to parents.

Eileen Hopkins, director of development at the NAS, says: "It is much, much better than it was ten years ago, but it is still patchy."

Powell adds: "The professionals just say 'We think it's autism', and then families are on their own. They just feel like they drop off a cliff."

With some disabilities, there is genuine progress towards a decent system of early diagnosis.

By 2005, all newborn babies in England will have their hearing tested, following five years of pilot schemes. Scotland has just begun its own national roll-out of pilot schemes, and Wales is due to begin national newborn screening this month.

Louise Williams, audiology manager for the National Deaf Children's Society, says things are "definitely" improving.

"The best way to identify a child with permanent hearing loss is as early as possible. Otherwise, the parents will be playing 'catch-up' with a child who has missed out on so much useful information that a hearing child would have picked up."

With cystic fibrosis (CF),



Left alone: the Middletons got little support after diagnosis

too, the government has approved a national screening programme of newborn babies across England, although it is not yet certain when it will start. Scotland is due to launch a national programme soon. Wales, in common with some English regions, already has one.

With CF, early diagnosis is crucial. Without treatment, most children with the condition would be dead by early childhood.

Dr Jim Littlewood, chair of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust research and medical advisory committee, says: "It is absolutely crucial to get them early, before they become

malnourished and before they get chronic damage to the chest by repeated infections."

Littlewood says national screening will be a "massive move forward" after nearly seven years of campaigning.

Without screening, after all, it is difficult to know how many children with different disabilities there are and decide what provision to make.

And for those conditions where there is no national screening programme, such as autism and muscular dystrophy, there is a need to raise awareness among professionals and develop recognised standards for diagnosis and disclosure.

Rowland says: "There is a lot of guidance on sharing the news. It's now about implementing the guidance that is already out there."

Delays in diagnosing their son with autism cost Liz and Kingsley Fossu a valuable year in which they had no idea how to help him.

The couple, from Doncaster, first raised their concerns with their GP in November 2000, when Linus was two-and-a-half. They were eventually referred to a paediatrician, who also failed to spot that Linus had autism.

They insisted on another opinion and were referred to a specialist centre, which finally diagnosed autism in December 2001.

"Once we knew it was autism, we pulled out all the stops and we handled him so differently," says Liz. "The more we learn, the happier he is and the family just functions better. Parents should be listened to, because we do know our child better than they do."



Although Owain Harcombe (left), from West Glamorgan, had all the symptoms of cystic fibrosis (CF), none of the doctors who examined him diagnosed it.

On one occasion, when he was in hospital, his heart stopped.

It was only when his mum Donna happened to read a CF poster that she recognised his symptoms. Two weeks before his first birthday, in 1997, Owain was finally diagnosed with CF.

His mum says: "There was some damage to his chest that probably would not have happened if he had been screened at birth. And we would not have had to go through that nightmare during his first year."



For Annemarie Derby, from Belfast, an early diagnosis of her second profoundly deaf child, Aimee (centre), made all the difference.

Her first daughter, Orla, hadn't been diagnosed until 18 months. She kept passing the basic "distraction" hearing tests, but her mum was still sure she was deaf.

"They kept telling me I was paranoid and over-anxious. It took four tests to get referred to an audiologist."

"Having an early diagnosis with Aimee after two weeks made all the difference. I was shown how to play with her, so I could have more personal contact, reassure her, be tactile and very visual. I couldn't do that with Orla."



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'We know we are doing something worthwhile'

Gillian Archbold struggled to get information when her baby was diagnosed – and it made her determined to help other carers

My daughter Sabrina, who is now 22, was born with cerebral palsy. From the moment I gave birth to her I knew there was something wrong. But until she was ten months old, I was told I was just being an over-protective parent.

It was while we were on holiday that Sabrina got meningitis and we were finally given the diagnosis. How long might we otherwise have had to wait to know?

The first thing we were offered was to put our little girl into a home, as the doctors stood there and told us she would be a vegetable all her life. I don't know if my need to help other carers started then, but from that moment I knew I was going to prove these doctors wrong.

I set out to find as much information as possible on Sabrina's disability and what support was available to help us. It was a real struggle to find any at all, so my husband and I set about reading articles and anything that could help our daughter.

Over the next few years we took Sabrina to Budapest for treatment and to several different hospitals, and our

'I set out to find as much information as possible on Sabrina's disability and what support was available to help us. It was a real struggle to find any at all'

determination paid off. She is a very clever, independent woman. She is a wheelchair user, but that has not stopped her achieving her ambition to be a crèche worker.

But I realised that, though I had been able to help other carers I had met in hospital waiting rooms, there was a bigger need for information on all aspects of disability. I had collected quite a lot of knowledge and contacts that could be passed on to a wider audience.

I set about developing Special Abilities about three years ago, with the help of my daughter. We started off by providing information through our website, www.abilities.fsnet.co.uk. My then video repair man helped design the site and our bear logo.



Caught in the web: Gillian and Sabrina at work on the website

The website provides information on all aspects of disability, from education to helpful organisations. We have had it translated into five languages, have a fathers' page (as they tend to be forgotten), and we have a children's page and art gallery.

Children can interact with the website and learn disability

forum, which will be made up of several special needs groups.

But I think our biggest achievement to date are our information booklets. We have a national one which gives help on all aspects of the needs of disabled children, but also one on Wakefield and the surrounding area, which is where we are based. Our booklets were funded by the Children's Fund and the Scarman Trust.

But we don't want to stop there. In the future we plan to hold disability awareness training sessions; have a base that will provide a one-stop shop for information on all aspects of special needs and a forum where carers and their children will be heard; develop the website to be more accessible; and provide play and chat sessions.

But our overall aim is to reach as many carers as possible to help them find the right information at the right time. That way we can help their child achieve their potential, just as Sabrina has.

For details or an information booklet, free to carers/£3 to groups, write to PO Box 360, Wakefield WF2 8WG, tel: 07796 038291, e-mail: special@abilities.fsnet.co.uk



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Motability – good news and bad

Welcome changes are taking place at Motability, says Douglas Campbell, but there are clouds on the horizon

Motability announced big changes to their contract hire scheme on 1 February.

These changes come as Motability enters its 25th year of enabling huge numbers of disabled people to achieve a better level of mobility than could have been achieved without the scheme, but also at a time when Motability customers may face price rises from manufacturers.

The most noticeable change at Motability will be a new

will be allowed an increase to 38,000 miles immediately and will get the new rate when they next change their car.

A new fair wear and tear policy ensures customers are not penalised for unavoidable damage caused by wheelchairs or other mobility aids. This has been an area where there have been huge problems and is the most welcome part of the changes. Motability will still have to look at all such damage so that those users who do take reasonable care do not subsidise

not have any details yet.

Also coming in is a change in the way Motability communicates with customers. For far too long customers found that they did not know whether to contact Motability in Harlow, Motability Finance in London or Bristol, or even Royal & Sun Alliance in Liverpool. Having a single contact point operating under the name Motability Operations should make life much easier. But it will be an enormous challenge to remove the bureaucracy.

Motability says these changes will be achieved without increasing prices. Other reports say 90 jobs have ceased to exist at Motability Finance, which represents around ten per cent of the workforce. We also hear that all costs are under review with the aim of substantial reductions all round.

Unfortunately, Motability customers face increased prices due to issues outside Motability's control.

Vauxhall has ended its long-running loyalty scheme that offered a substantial discount to existing customers who chose another Vauxhall on renewing their contract.

'These changes come as Motability enters its 25th year of enabling huge numbers of disabled people to achieve a better level of mobility than could have been achieved without the scheme'

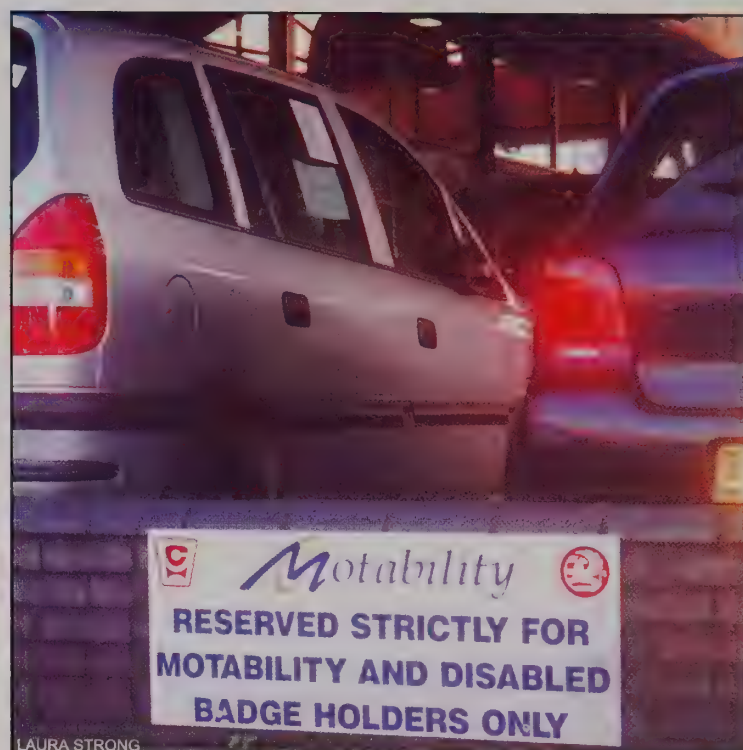
logo. Out goes the stylised wheelchair, which failed to reflect the wide range of disabled people using the scheme, and in comes a flower.

New contract hire customers benefit from an increased mileage allowance of 45,000 (previously 36,000) over a three-year lease. This is an additional 3,000 miles a year and will be especially welcomed by those living in rural areas. Customers who have contracts that started before the new changes began

unreasonable damage.

Contract hire customers may now buy their cars at the end of the three-year lease, subject to certain conditions. This is particularly relevant to people with heavily adapted vehicles. It will also allow customers who have cars in good condition to benefit, if they wish, from the care they have taken.

Motability also tell us: "Hire purchase options to buy a new or used car are now more competitive and come with increased flexibility". We do



Moving with the times: the old logo (above) and the new (below)

And Renault said it will seek less business through Motability. Announcing the decision to take a back seat with Motability, Renault UK's fleet director said "We have backed off and will not do business at a loss".

Has Motability Finance squeezed car manufacturers to the point where they are losing money and would rather not make sales through the scheme? If so, their prices will increase to the point where they can make a profit and disabled



people will be much worse off.

Clearly, Motability customers must carefully compare the prices of suitable cars from all manufacturers in the scheme and not just stick with their existing supplier. If you order a new car less than three months before the contract renewal date, future price increases will have no impact.

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Volkswagen Transporter. 1.9 litre turbo diesel, W Reg, May 2000, 13,500 miles, blue, full width ramp, space for two wheelchairs, 4 seats. £11,500

Citroen Dispatch. 1.9 litre diesel, X reg, February 2001, 10,000 miles, red, full width ramp, 4 seats. £11,250

Peugeot Boxer. 1.9 litre diesel, T reg, April 1999, 58,500 miles, white, telescopic ramps, 1 or 2 wheelchairs, 9 seats. £7,000 plus VAT

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Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the editor
Mary Wilkinson, Disability Now,
6 Market Road, London N7 9PW,
minicom: 020 7619 7332,
fax: 020 7619 7331,
e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

Ideas, anyone?

I co-ordinate an IT training project for disabled people around Nottingham, currently working with 18 disability organisations.

Many of our students (and tutors) have expressed an interest in progressing to further training. Learn direct would be an ideal vehicle for this, allowing them to continue working in the locations and with the software, hardware and support they are comfortable with.

Unfortunately, we have experienced difficulties accessing learn direct courses, especially with people whose first language is BSL or who are blind.

Are we alone, or have others come across this problem? It is a shame that such a potentially valuable and high profile resource should not be fully accessible.

Jerome Baddley
Cascade Co-ordinator
Nottingham CVS

Why should employers pay more?

So there's to be another enquiry into the Access to Work (AtW) scheme? (DN, December)

My own experience is an excellent example of why 85 per cent of companies would not want to get into hiring disabled staff.

In 1995 AtW agreed to supply and maintain me with a lightweight wheelchair for work purposes. In 2001 the original chair required replacing.

AtW laid down the following conditions as a result of the "rules" being changed: my employer paid £1,450 in advance for the purchase of the wheelchair and then AtW repaid my employer £1,140, thereby charging them £300. Worse was to come. By consenting to pay for the wheelchair, the employer took on the liability of maintaining it.

So what service does AtW provide? And why, after the initial supply, do they opt out of further obligation?

By working, I have paid my taxes at local and national level. To expect employers to pay extra for employing me is surely the worst possible incentive to employing a disabled person.

Am I expecting too much of the state, to subsidise my working in a way that my fellow workers take for granted, when they travel by subsidised public transport to our place of employment?

Kenneth Matheson
London W6

Desperate measures: B&Q reply

Following your coverage of Mr Jenkins' case (DN February), I would like to respond.

B&Q is very aware of the

need for all of our customers to receive an excellent standard of service. Over 3 million customers shop at B&Q stores every week, and we recognise that we don't always get it right.

We take all complaints seriously, including those from disabled people, and we deal with each one on an individual basis and enter into communication and dialogue with the customer.

We would be more than happy to enter into communication with Mr Jenkins.

Sue O'Neill
B&Q Diversity Manager
Tel: 023 8025 7338 or e-mail
diversity@b-and-q.co.uk

Deafblind people are ignored by public services

I am learning British Sign Language (BSL) and teaching myself Braille in order to communicate with deafblind people.

What I do not understand is why the Metropolitan police, social services and the health services do not have more personnel trained in BSL and Braille.

As I recently learned, a deaf person got a longer jail sentence because the prison officers thought they were being insolent. I feel this is unfair.

If it believes in equal opportunities, why has the government not done anything to promote awareness?

Rosa Manson
Cullompton, Devon

Guide dogs, but not only

I am a member of Portsmouth's Disability Forum and sit on the access committee.

It was brought to our attention that new shops still display the sign "Guide dogs only".

We consider that, as more dogs are now used in various roles by disabled people, and we have the Disability Discrimination Act, there needs to be a new sign encompassing them all. What do other readers think?

Brian Rains
Wymering, Hampshire

DN hits the spot

I'm sure many readers felt heartened by your inclusive approach towards a group (transpeople) who are often discriminated against, whether disabled or not (DN February).

To become involved in action for transsexual people's civil rights, contact Press for Change: pfc.org.uk

Frances/Felix Simister

PC pulse

by Dan Batten

Let's (not) be Frank

Reader Sarah Maling was appalled to see comedian Frank Skinner getting a cheap laugh by mocking disabled people on his show in January.

Impersonating a severely disabled person, Skinner claimed that he acted this way if he was followed at night, adding that the more disabled he acted the



less likely he was to be followed, especially if he dribbled as well. You'll lose a lot more of your following making crass comments like this, Frank.

(Almost) on the right track

A *Sunday Telegraph* piece tracked a man with Thalidomide on his enforced journey to work by bus and tube, due to Ken Livingstone rigidly accepting that people with thalidomide do not qualify for exemption from his congestion charge. Pity the disabled people were once again referred to as "victims". Spoilt a good piece.

Teen spirit



Barney Blackburn

I started school with a Statement of Special Educational needs as I could not

talk in a way that anyone could understand and I could not spell or read to save my life.

After lots of speech therapy I eventually could talk in a clearer way and after some time my Statement was taken away.

My next and hardest challenge was to face my dyslexia. I soon realised that however hard I tried I would never be able to spell or read at all well so I came up with many ideas to overcome the problems.

If I needed to read a book I would get it on tape and listen instead. There is a great charity called Listening Books that send you as many tapes as you want for just £50 a year. So that's my way of overcoming my reading problems.

The main way I overcome my spelling and presentation problems is to use a computer in school. I use a little, light and compact Apple iBook that is really useful and I could not live without it. A great thing about it is its size and its great battery. I use a spell checker to solve my spelling problems and my presentation is automatically neater.

It would have been so much easier and more helpful if there had been a website to help me when I needed it most. That is why I have started my own website about dyslexia, to share my ideas and problems with other dyslexic people. The website address is www.iamdyslexic.com and I would love you to visit! *Barney's website is one of Yahoo's 12 best sites of the year. It covers his history (Barney as a baby and his spelling aged four are above), tips on spelling, typing and computers, quizzes, success stories from others, and his own mail order software.*

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Wunder spa

Imagine a world where health spa visits are covered on the NHS. In Austria, it's a reality. TV actress and newspaper columnist Julie Fernandez reaped the benefits



A while ago, I suffered a severe attack of sciatica. For five days I slept on a chair that I could lie flat on and had a pad underneath my bottom to go to the toilet. A simple flick of my little toe triggered the sciatic nerve and the pain was unbearable. Thankfully, it did go away, but it left me extremely worried that it would happen again if I wasn't careful.

As a strong believer in complementary therapies – especially when used in conjunction with modern medicine – I decided to go to Austria for a week's stay in a health spa to recover. Austrian health spas integrate complementary therapies with modern medicine, physiotherapy, exercise and appropriate food. Spa visits are offered to every Austrian citizen on their national health service between one and four weeks a year, with a doctor's referral, and depending on specific needs.

Bad Eisenkappel, the spa I visited, is in the south of Austria, in Carinthia, 555 metres above sea level. The clinic sits in the nook of a pine forest and has a serene atmosphere. Their motto is "growing older, staying healthy", which you certainly do when visiting the spa.

The cost for a week includes full board at the four-star hotel, an appointment with the physician (where you have time to explain your problems and put together a package of therapies that cater for your specific needs), 14 treatments and a range of blood tests, including for diabetes and cholesterol. Breakfast is buffet style, and the lunch and evening meals have a choice of four menus – fish, meat, vegetarian and diabetic. The food is designed so that one course can help the next digest through your system better.

The clinic has a friendly, qualified team of physicians, therapists and supporting staff to maximise the benefits that can be derived from a week's stay. They are on call throughout the day.

On offer are the standard therapies available in most health spas, including indoor and outdoor swimming pools, sauna, steam, solarium, gym, beauty treatments as well as specialist treatments. There is also a bar serving great wine and beer – two glasses of red wine cost just £1.80.

Every day, I had physiotherapy in the water to take the pressure off my back and joints,

answer your medical questions there and then and know what they were talking about.

People of all ages attend these clinics, but Bad Eisenkappel tends to lean towards people who have had strokes or heart attacks. In fact, a man in his eighties who had had a stroke arrived on the same day as us, shuffling at a snail's pace with his head hanging down. Within four days, he was able to take bigger steps and even danced with a few of the women one evening.

Bad Eisenkappel is a great place to visit for a week or two and can be coupled with a trip to Italy, which is only an hour

'Austrian health spas work by integrating complementary therapies with modern medicine, physiotherapy, exercise and appropriate food'

a massage and fango – a therapy consisting of putting a mudpack with special minerals on my back. I was then lowered into a flotation tank to sweat out the impurities. Not only did I feel physically fitter at the end of the week, but I also felt mentally and emotionally better. It was amazing to have someone

away by car. I will certainly be going back, so I hope to see some of you there.

Julie paid £320 for a week's stay at the spa and £69 return to Klagenfurt with Ryanair. Tel: 00 43 4 23 89 05 00, e-mail: dir.schabernig@kurzentrum.at website: www.kurzentrum.at English brochures available.



Here's to your health: Many treatments are available at Bad Eisenkappel (above and below), ranging from beauty treatments and massage to complementary and conventional medicine.



THE NATIONAL TRUST

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The National Trust welcomes visitors with disabilities to its superb historic buildings, gardens, countryside and coast in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For a free information booklet giving access details and information please send a 44p stamp to cover postage to:

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email: enquiries@thenationaltrust.org.uk

Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

TACKLE THIS!

www.clos-o-mat.com

Do you dream of being by a river, concentrating solely on catching fish? If that idea hooks you, you could win three days fishing on the River Doon in Scotland with four nights stay at the luxurious Turnberry Hotel (one runner-up will receive two days fishing and three days stay). All this is courtesy of Clos-o-Mat. Fill in the form below and you could land a monster prize!

OPEN ONLY TO PEOPLE WHO ARE DISABLED AND THEIR CARERS

Please complete the competition form and forward it to: Total Hygiene/Clos-o-Mat, Bank House, 182-186 Washway Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 6RN

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel No

Age ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Wheelchair user ☐ Ambulant ☐

Helper needed - YES/NO

Please advise what help would be required

Wheelchair accessible hotel room required Yes ☐ No ☐

Loan of fly fishing tackle Yes ☐ No ☐

Other facilities needed

Please tick the correct answer to the questions below:

What is the name for a female salmon after she has laid her eggs?

A. Smolt ☐ B. Kelt ☐ C. Parr ☐

What is the name given to a salmon that returns to fresh water having spent one year at sea (usually about 4-6lbs in weight)?

A. Fry ☐ B. Parr ☐ C. Grilse ☐

Entry to the Clos-o-Mat competition is free to all disabled persons. There is no monetary value connected to this prize and no correspondence will be entered into. The prize is not transferable. Clos-o-Mat will draw the winning entries at their headquarters. All winners will be notified by phone or post.

FINAL ENTRY DATE 30 MAY 2003

Hip tips for your trips

Need a break? Whether you want fun-filled adventure, a holiday soaking up the sun or information on accessible facilities, *DN* has the answers

JUBILEE SAILING TRUST

I went to sleep because of the fatigue caused by my disability. Our first watch was from midnight to 4am, which I was in good shape for.

I found that duties were carried out in rotation, all contributing to the safe sailing of the ship. The weather steadily deteriorated during the watch, visibility worsening and the sea becoming rougher. It seemed that most people had not taken

their sea sickness tablets or perhaps not taken them well enough in advance! Fortunately, I was not affected and thoroughly enjoyed undertaking various duties while the ship was in a good wind and tossing about a bit. "Happy hour" happens every day and consists of work to keep the ship smart, clean and, therefore, disease free.

After 16 hours my watch was on again. Fewer people are required when the ship is in a harbour or at anchor, although an additional duty then is to repel boarders!

We anchored at Newlyn off the coast of Cornwall, then the ship motored round Landsend and, with a favourable wind, on to Cove, the famous and historic harbour of Cork – last port of call for the Titanic. We did a little sightseeing and then sailed on to Dublin's fair city, where we stopped for a while. Then we

had more excellent sailing past the Isle of Man and the Mull of Kintyre. I was lucky enough to be at the helm while we sailed past Malin Head. The wind was in our favour, allowing us to anchor in Lough Swilly off Donegal, where we practised the man overboard procedure and did some further sail training.

We then let the wind turn us round, changing the sails to do so, and steadily sailed on to the exit of Lough Swilly, out to sea and on to Scotland. We tied up at Greenock. I was on watch when we left, so I was part of the group untying the ship and we joined it after in the dicky boat, a small inflatable that can be lowered into the water when required.

Eventually, we were sailing up the Clyde and finally tied up at Yorkhill Quay in Glasgow. It was time to say goodbye to my

fellow crew members after a wonderful ten days. I was extremely sorry to leave the Lord Nelson, where I had seen people working together harmoniously, learning new skills. I certainly hope I will sail again one day on the Lord Nelson or her sister ship, STS Tenacious.

Robert Cochrane

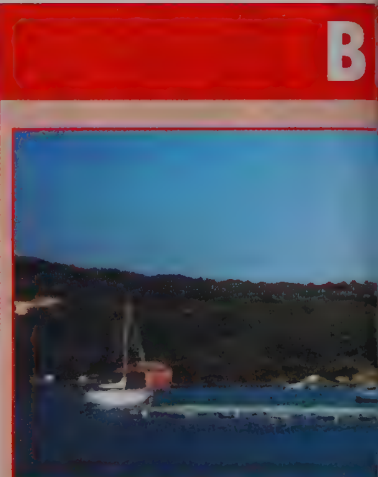
A voyage costs up to about £500; some funding is available from JST. Write to the Jubilee Sailing Trust, Hazel Road, Woolston, Southampton SO19 7GB, e-mail: info@jst.org.uk, website: www.jst.org.uk



Fancy yourself as a seafarer? The Jubilee Sailing Trust has two square-rigged sailing ships that are on voyages for most of the year in the waters round Britain and elsewhere, for example the Canary Islands. When sailing with a full crew, there are about 40 people of mixed ability on board. There is a permanent crew, but a great deal of the work is done by the mixed ability crew, who are organised in watches.

At Dartmouth, I was given a warm welcome on board the STS Lord Nelson and was taken by my watch leader to where I could stow my gear. I met my buddy – all crew members are allocated one – and in due course met the rest of my watch.

After a brief address by the captain and some of the permanent crew, followed by a most acceptable evening meal,



I needed a holiday, and how. After two turbulent years, and the end of a 25-year marriage, I found myself a disabled single parent of a 13-year-old daughter, and something of a package holiday virgin.

We used to take the car ferry to Europe or visit cities with a hired wheelchair for me. Now the nuclear family had exploded and there was no one to push. I needed sun, sea and spoiling rotten. But where?

Able-bodied friends raved about their fave places, but, with very limited walking ability, in my body's language "only a short stroll" meant something very different from theirs. Would I travel half the world to find myself trapped in the hotel? Then someone recommended Menorca, naming Cala Galdana as amazingly compact. I decided to risk it. I splashed out on half

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will be there for us should we need you"

Mr & Mrs Bonfield of Dunstable



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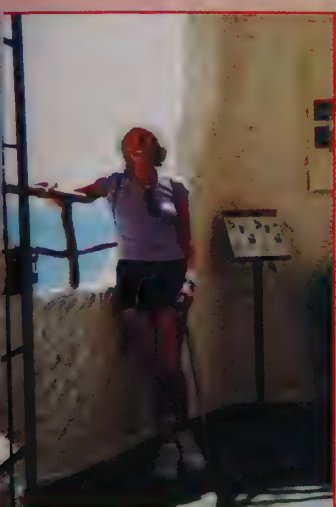
Access Travel (Lancs) Ltd, 6 The Hillock, Astley, Lancs M29 7GW, tel: 01942 888844.



S IN THE BALEARICS



ard at a hotel, as I was
ried self-catering villas might
too far from shops or cafés.
So I found myself floating in
warm, scarcely moving
editerranean of an intense
ie-green, in a tiny cove
rounded by white cliffs and
een vegetation, officially in
aven. And the hotel, with a



large, crystal clean pool of its
own, was only yards away.

For two weeks, my daughter
Lydia and I lay by the pool or
on the sandy beach,
occasionally snorkelling in the
sea. We even tried scuba diving;
the instructor went to great
lengths to accommodate my
needs. The buffet meals were
magnificent, fresh local food,
and I speak as a veggie, so
carnivores would be truly
spoiled for choice with the
seafood and meat options,
different every day.

We lived in sarongs and
bikinis. With resting all day, I
was able to walk down the tiny
street of shops and bars at
night. Entertainment, most very
good, was provided outside the
hotel under a magic moon.
There was no rowdiness or all-
night noise.

The hot, dry air worked

wonders for my painful joints. It
was almost like a holiday from
being disabled, something I'd
never imagined in 16 years.

Excursions to historic towns
or to see the famous performing
horses, or boat trips in Mahon
harbour at sunset, added to the
fun. It's easy to take taxis from
outside the hotel to do your
own cheaper excursions, as
Menorca is very compact.

The Thomson reps were very
helpful and kind, as were the
locals. I will certainly go back,
though the experience has made
me more confident about trying
other places.

We flew from Newcastle;
those who can use Stansted and
cheap flights could contact the
hotel direct.

Valerie Laws

*We stayed at Hotel Cala
Galdana (www.infotelecom.es/galdana, tel: 971 154500); the
Hotel Sol Gavilanes was also
recommended. We paid £1,800
for a fortnight's package, includ-
ing twin room with balcony,
half-board in August; outside
school holidays it was almost
half that. The hotel has villas
near cafés and restaurants. We
booked through Lincoln Travel
(www.lincolndirect.com) with
Thomson Holidays.*

GREAT DANES!



When you take a trip abroad,
you can find out what help
your airline will provide or
get an idea of what your
accommodation will look like
without too many problems.
But ask your travel agent for
detailed information on
facilities for disabled
holidaymakers and the
chances are they'll be
completely flummoxed.

But if you decide on a trip
to West Jutland in Denmark,
getting hold of such
information shouldn't prove
anywhere near as difficult.
Danish campaign Access for
All has produced a 68-page
brochure giving details on
West Jutland's accessibility.
All 240 locations examined in
the brochure have been
visited by disabled user
groups. The brochure offers a
short access synopsis of
places, with more in-depth
information available on the
brochure's partner website*.
County Mayor of
Ringkjøbing County, Knud
Munk Niesen, sees the
creation of accessible
environments as logical.

"As a place becomes more
accessible to disabled people,
it is at the same time
becoming more accessible to
everyone else," he says.

Hotels, holiday cottages,
camping sites and hostels
have been assessed on criteria
including access to the
building, bathroom facilities,
internal steps and parking

facilities. Another section of
the brochure looks at regional
attractions, including
museums such as the
Holstebro, which has items
from the stone, bronze and
iron ages, tin toys from
manufacturers including
Meccano and special
exhibitions. There are also tips
for younger visitors, with
places including Legoland –
praised for its clear signage
and wheelchair access – and
the thrilling funfair Varde
Sommerland.

If you prefer something
more sedate, there is plenty of
art and history to take in. At
Kloster Design you can watch
candlemakers at work, while
the Danish Collection of
Vintage Aircraft will keep
those with their heads in the
clouds amused: 40 aircraft,
including Meteor, Starfighter
and Draken jets, are on
display in an easily negotiable
building.

Although the access groups
have surveyed a large number
of places and made
suggestions on how to
improve them for disabled
visitors, their work isn't
finished yet. The campaign
plans to visit more venues and
provide disabled visitors with
further information to make
their holidays more
accessible. The only question
that remains is when will
other places follow suit?

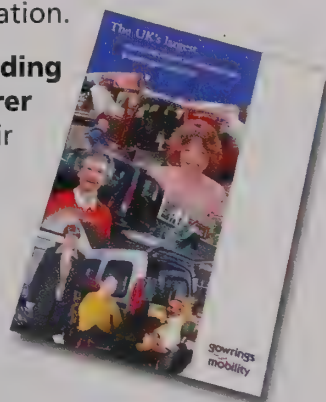
Dan Batten

*www.disabledtravelguide.com

Derrick doesn't need a prompt to tell people how much
difference his car made to him and his wife. And the service he
got from Gowrings Mobility was all part of that experience, he's
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NORDIC WONDER



SCANDINAVIAN CAPITALS & RUSSIA

This month's DN Travel Club offer is a 12-night cruise of the Scandinavian capitals and Russia.

The Norwegian Dream slips its moorings in Dover for the easiest of crossings through the Kiel Canal into the Baltic, all the way to Russia and back. You'll love the pace and the places, not least because you'll spend two days in St Petersburg and stay over in Copenhagen (above). There are a limited number of accessible cabins, so book now!

- 12-night cruise sailing from Dover on the fabulous Norwegian Dream (Norwegian Cruise Line) 28 April & 10 May 2003
- Prices from just £1,075 (was £1,999)
- Plus, free for DN Travel Club members only: champagne and chocolates on arrival in your cabin.
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DN TRAVEL CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name

Address

E-mail

Do you travel overseas? Yes ☐ No ☐

How often?

Favourite destination?

Have you ever been on a cruise? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you use a wheelchair? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you like to know about our Sensory Travel service for people with visual and hearing impairments? Yes ☐ No ☐

Send this form to Accessible Travel and Leisure, Avionics House, Naas Lane, Quedgeley, Glos., GL2 2SN England

Rules & Regulations

1. Applicants will be issued with a membership number which must be quoted at the time of booking. Otherwise no discounts or special offers will apply once a confirmation of booking has been issued.
2. Discounts and special offers will apply to the member and all other parties booking under the same lead name/party organiser, unless expressly indicated otherwise in the relevant DN Travel Club offer.
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4. Any discounts offered will be deducted from the final balance.



Health on board

Fancy a holiday with easy access to kidney dialysis? It can be done, if you plan ahead. Verité Reily Collins looks at the options

"I'm just off for dialysis," said my fellow cruise passenger as she disappeared into the ship's hospital, which was just a step down the corridor instead of a time-consuming journey to the local clinic – who needs that on holiday?

In 1980, Dr Peter Rittich from Hamburg organised the first "dialysis cruise". Clients returned year after year and, today, his company operates Fresenius machines on cruise liners such as MS Deutschland (above).

According to "dialysis holiday" expert Christine Gledhill of Freedom Apartments and Hotels, it is one of the most popular liners with British passengers. It cruises the world, from the Arctic to Asia, stopping off in the Mediterranean, South Seas and other exotic places. There are eight stations in its dialysis unit, and passengers from Britain with a form E111 pay around 100 Euros (£60) per session.

It can be difficult to find out information about dialysis on holiday. One website e-mailed back: "None of our cruise vessels have dialysis equipment", when their brochure, ex-passengers and Christine Gledhill said they did!

Charities can arrange holidays with dialysis in local centres for kidney patients, but throw up their hands in horror at the thought that sometimes patients might be prepared to pay more for dialysis on-site.

On-site options may be more

expensive than a clinic, but it is surely up to the client to decide if they want to pay extra for convenience. The full cost has to be paid on US ships, but E111 absorbs much of the cost in Europe.

According to Christine, "We were asked so many times for cruises" that they now organise holidays for "around 400-500 people every year". Most cruises involve flying to the embarkation port, but Christine says: "We haven't had any problems so far." She can arrange dialysis on-site at apartments, and currently she is working out an itinerary for a regular client to cruise round the world.

Regular cruisers Colin Sevenoaks and his wife Marian were full of praise for Christine's organisation. They have been on a Mediterranean cruise and Colin says: "The Deutschland is still new – really very luxurious. There were three dialysis patients: a German, a lady from Leeds and me. As well as the cruise line doctor there was a nephrologist, and the whole thing was very efficient." They are off again to Norway, Spitzbergen and Iceland in June.

So are there any problems? Colin Sevenoaks says: "You really have to start thinking several months ahead to get the whole thing organised; you might have to have a course of hepatitis injections."

Other tips to remember: the E111 is *not* a repatriation form, so make sure you also carry

medical insurance. (Dr Rittich offers a repatriation option if you are on a transplant list.) And you will need strong sun protection: Swiss skincare company La Prairie make creams with a SPF 50 factor (tel: 01932 827060), or try Boots' own brand.

European health services are often more generous than the NHS, and recently several hotels opened dialysis units in Turkey, catering for German and Dutch patients. I visited one at the Kivanc Hotel near Bodrum which has a superb view of the sea. Sadly, international worries have closed these. Once the crisis is over, watch the hotel's website.

Here are some places I have discovered, but not visited, so do check the facilities before you book.

An easy car journey to Harwich, then a four-hour crossing on Stena Line's high-speed ferry, brings you to Hook van Holland, not far from Banjaard holiday village in the Kampenland. It has beaches, self-catering family accommodation and an on-site dialysis centre.

In Austria's Tirol, Dr Höss claims: "We have different-sized apartments in the same house as our dialysis centre."

In the US, Snow Mountain Ranch is about 15 miles from Winter Park ski slopes in the Rockies. Accommodation ranges from dormitory-style rooms to fully equipped homes, and they have a complete dialysis centre on-site.

Banjaard, www.roompot.nl/debanjaard

Freedom Apartments and Hotels, www.freedom-apartments.com

www.kidney.org.uk has handy travelling tips

Kivanc Hotel, www.kivanchotel.com

Snow Mountain Ranch, www.ymcarockies.org

Stena Line, www7.stenaline.co.uk

Tirol, hoess@tirol.com

Wheels of fortune

Tempted by a cycling holiday? Allan Sutherland points you in the right direction with holiday ideas and tips

Cycle holidays are one of the best ways to get the most out of your bike.

Jim Bush, 37, is a keen cyclist. In 1999 he cycled New Zealand end to end, raising money for the Limbless Association and Headway, a journey covering 1,607 miles. He now takes regular holidays on his bike, a Dawes Horizon with minor adjustments for his artificial leg. In 2001, he rode from Vienna to Prague. Last year he rode from Bordeaux to Barcelona in a group of 49 cyclists.

For both trips Jim travelled with Bike Tours of Bath (now Cycle Rides). Supported tours such as this provide an easy option if you can use a regular cycle or have your own adapted

people have their own bikes, we're very happy to arrange tours with accommodation to fit their specifications."

If organising your own itinerary, bear in mind that some train companies refuse to carry cycles, and only a few will take tandems or tricycles. Check the leaflet *Cycling by Train - The National Rail Guide*, available from stations, or check the rundown on AtoB magazine's website. If holidaying this way, you should join the Cyclists' Touring Club, which will give you insurance, a legal claims service and a wealth of information.

If travelling to Europe, forget the train: Eurostar carries no cycles at all. You could use

bike, it can be difficult to hire adapted cycles. Specialists London Recumbents don't like to hire for long periods, partly because their bikes are adapted for London riding. Oliver Taylor advises: "It's worth booking bikes at your holiday destination. You'll have no transport problems, and the bikes will be suitable for the terrain. Places like Majorca have lots of three and four-wheel bikes for hire, as well as loads of uprights".

Contact details should be available through tourist information for your holiday destination.

A very few firms provide a specialist service. Pedal Away runs tours and has bikes, including recumbents, tandems, trikes and wheelchair tandems.

Bike Trail, in Devon, is "committed to making cycling accessible for everyone. We have a wide range of special bikes and our expert mechanic will be happy to try and convert a bike to your needs if you give us plenty of notice". The special bikes include tandems, tricycles, hand-cranked bicycles and wheelchair tandems. They also offer accessible accommodation.

Tandem riders might like to try an adventure bike tour with

'If organising your own itinerary, bear in mind that some train companies refuse to carry cycles, and only a few will take tandems or tricycles'

cycle. Bikes are transported by van to your start point, luggage taken on to your destination every day, maps and a back-up mechanic provided.

Another of the larger cycling holiday firms, Country Lanes, which has centres in the Cotswolds, New Forest and Lake District, told me: "We don't offer adapted cycles, because we it would be difficult to provide them to the standard of our regular bikes. But if

European Bike Express, which provides coach travel and bike haulage to destinations in France and northern Italy.

Or travel by boat. No advance warning is needed, and tandems and trikes are not a problem.. Check the AtoB website to see which ferries take bikes

If you don't have your own

Assisted Cycling Tours, www.assistedcyclingtours.org

AtoB Magazine, www.atob.org.uk/bike_rail.html

Bike Trail, tel: 01271 372586, www.biketrail.co.uk/outlets.htm

Country Lanes, tel: 01425 655022, www.countrylanes.co.uk

Cycle Rides, tel: 0800 389 3384, www.cycle-rides.co.uk

Cyclists Touring Club, tel: 0870 873 0061, www.ctc.org.uk

Erickson Cycle Tours, www.ecycletrips.com

European Bike Express, tel: 01642 251440, www.bike-express.co.uk

Pedal Away, tel: 01989 770357,

www.btinternet.com/~pedal/away

Wildcat Bike Tours, tel: 01786 464333, www.wildcat-bike-tours.co.uk

LONDON WHEELS

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) will launch its new Disability Action Group on 25 March at City Hall. Starting at 10.30am, the event will be attended by Mayor Ken Livingstone. The group wants to inform all Londoners about the cycling opportunities for people with impairments and publicise key events for riders of all abilities in 2003. Disabled people should be able to test a range of accessible cycles at the launch.

The group is looking for new members, who need to be members of LCC. Advantages of membership include free third-party insurance, discounts in London bike shops, access to theft insurance, legal advice and *London Cyclist* magazine.

Membership of LCC is £27.50 a year, tel: 020 7928 7220, www.lcc.org.uk

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Tyred out: Jim Bush takes a break on his New Zealand trip

Wildcat Tours, which offers Scotland Coast-to-Coast, the Hebridean islands, Spanish Sierras or Morocco.

The US firm Erickson Tours runs a good selection of tandem tours to France and Switzerland.

Further afield, Assisted Cycling Tours of Colorado can "take any child or adult with a disability on a fully supported cycling tour of Colorado and beyond". Other tours planned this year include Newfoundland and Vermont.

IT'S A GIVEAWAY!

To mark the launch of its Disability Action Group, London Cycling Campaign is giving away copies of its *All Ability Cycling Guide* (normal cost: £3.50). Send an A5 SAE to: *All Ability Cycling Guide*, London Cycling Campaign, Unit 228, 30 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 0HS.

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email: caroline.northover@btinternet.com

Creditable changes

Mike Hurdiss explains how new tax credits could help you

If you are in work and on a low income or are responsible for a child or young person, you may be eligible for new tax credits to be introduced this April. They reproduce the help now available through Disabled Person's Tax Credit (DPTC) and Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) but in a different form.

Whereas help for adults and children within a family is combined in DPTC and WFTC, it will be separated in future into two new tax credits, the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Working Tax Credit (WTC). Both will be claimed on one form (TC600) from the Inland Revenue.

The support for children contained within benefits like Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is also to be brought into the CTC. Claimants already getting these benefits will see this support transferred into the CTC from April 2004.

The new tax credits are going to be more generous and extend support to some people who have missed out in the past. The CTC will extend support to students and student nurses, while the WTC will cover people on low earnings who neither have children nor receive disability benefits.

The introduction of the new tax credits coincides with previously announced increases in allowances for disabled children and severely disabled workers, so there is added reason for getting in your application.

CTC – who qualifies?

As the new Inland Revenue poster points out, "Nine out of ten families with children are now entitled to tax credits".

The elements that make up the maximum child tax credit payable are shown in the box. How much is paid will depend on your household income.

As a guide, Inland Revenue information suggests that a family with two children and a gross annual income of £10,000 could expect £65.70 a week. With a gross annual income of £20,000 the family would still get £17.80 a week. These amounts will, of course, be higher if your family has a disabled child.

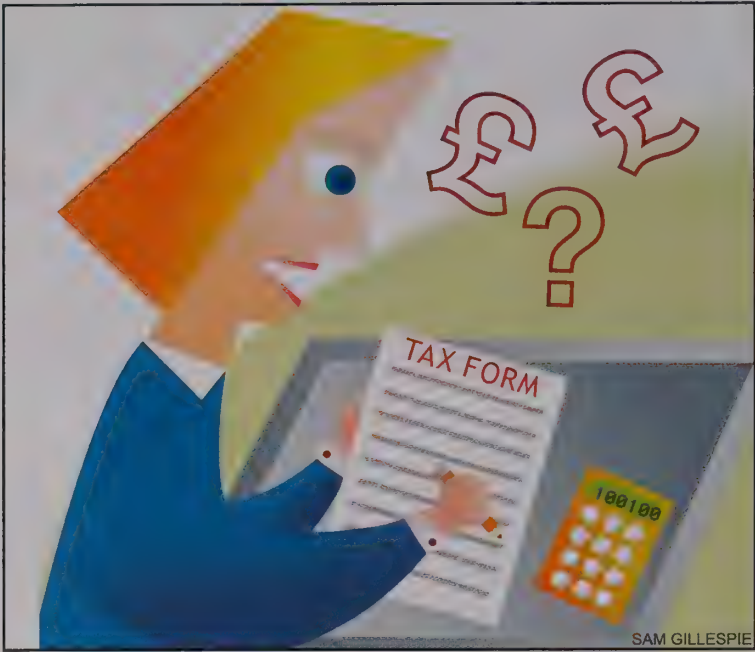
For more information on likely awards across the income range, see leaflet WTC1.

WTC – who qualifies?

WTC will continue to provide support to working parents and to disabled workers on qualifying disability benefits. In both cases, as now, applicants have to be working 16 or more hours a week. The WTC will also incorporate the time-limited New Deal 50+ Employment Credit.

The point at which earnings begin to reduce an award for disabled workers has risen significantly.

One of the complaints about DPTC has always been that many people who are disadvantaged by ill health or disability are excluded from support because they don't receive a qualifying disability benefit. Many disabled jobseekers and disabled people in work are among this group. The new WTC begins to address this issue, in part, by



Element	Annually 2003-04 (£)	Weekly equivalent (£)
Family element (one per family)	545	10.45
Family element, baby addition (paid to families with a child under one year old on top of family element)	545	10.45
Child element (paid for each child)	1,445	27.75
Disability element (paid in addition to the child element)	2,155	41.30
Severe disability addition (paid in addition to the child and disability elements)	865	16.60

introducing support for low earners aged 25 or over who work at least 30 hours a week. A single person in this situation could receive up to £41 a week and a couple up to £69.70.

The WTC will repeat help with the cost of childcare but this help, as with the CTC, will be paid direct to the main carer.

Help with childcare costs has been extended to cover the cost

of certain forms of approved childcare within the home. This could be particularly helpful to parents of disabled children.

Be accurate!

While detailed information must be provided on initial claims, a genuine attempt has been made to cut the information needed on renewals.

Awards of the new tax credits will be annual and based on previous year's taxable income. Applicants will need to retain tax notices, such as the P60 and Benefits Agency annual notices of taxable benefits paid.

Because of the level of automation being introduced into the assessment of awards, applicants will also need to take great care to give accurate information.

Other things to note

There is to be a much more sensible approach to income and savings: while income from taxable savings will be taken into account, there will be no capital ceiling as such. The rules around what changes in circumstances and income must/should be reported also strike a fairer balance for claimants.

It is not possible here to say in detail how the credits respond to changes that occur during the tax year and the obligations on applicants to report such changes. But it is, of course, important for all applicants to familiarise themselves with these requirements. Mike Hurdiss is a benefits policy officer at Scope.



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TV



Following last year's BBC2 documentary *Nap Attack* (which was criticised for its rather flippant tone), *Horizon: Living Nightmare* announced a serious scientific breakthrough in the treatment of narcolepsy, clearly a distressing and disabling condition. I wasn't laughing.

C4's *Royal Deaths and Diseases: Decadence* was a stomach-churning romp through regal gout, syphilis, obesity and drug addiction variously brought on by extravagance, gluttony, infidelity and big parties – and, no, they weren't talking about the present lot but Henry VIII, Charles II etc.

Someone who didn't bring it all on himself was the poor old *Lost Prince* (BBC1), banished with his nanny to a remote cottage because of his epilepsy. This much publicised two-parter was something of an anticlimax really – after all those trailers I felt I'd already seen it. Much more entertaining was the fascinating spin-off documentary *The King, The Kaiser and the Tsar* which revealed how these royal cousins (the Kaiser with a withered arm, the doomed Tsar's son Alexei with haemophilia) found their countries embroiled inexorably in WW1.

Back in the 21st century, ITV1's *The Bill* is so racy I'm surprised the cops have any time for policing – they're far too busy taking down each other's particulars behind the bike sheds. An interesting storyline of potential abuse concerning a man with a learning disability was turned on its head – he was actually abusing his elderly mother.

BBC1's *Panorama* spent five months with two of the 100,000 severely disabled children in Britain to uncover the scandal of chronic underfunding of appropriate care. Why did it take five months? After five minutes I got the picture. Compare and contrast *Christopher Reeve: Hope in Motion* (BBC1) whose care package costs an estimated £270,000 a year (paid by insurances) and who believes a cure for spinal cord injury is just around the corner. False hope? Who knows. Whatever gets you through.

Jane Shepherd

Film



Frida



The Mexican painter Frida Kahlo led a full life. She was disabled after a bus crash in her teens, married the muralist Diego Rivera (described here as "the best of friends, but the worst of husbands"), made a career as a painter and had an affair with Trotsky.

Julie Taymor's film focuses on the lifelong stormy romance between Kahlo (Salma Hayek, *above right*) and Rivera (Alfred Molina), counterpointed by their art. Where Rivera, a passionate communist, painted vast political murals, Kahlo delved into her inner life in a series of intense self-portraits.

The film suffers from a desire to pack in every known fact about Kahlo's life. What saves it is its great visual inventiveness. The bus crash becomes an event of enormous beauty, telling what happened without descending into pity. When Frida and Diego visit New York for an exhibition of his work, we see a collage of picture postcard images, with the couple striding through the middle – a technique evoking the bustle of the big city and, appropriately, experimental artistic and cinematic styles of the time.

This sophisticated use of animation extends to an interaction between live events and Kahlo's painted images. Unlike many biopics of artists, *Frida* is genuinely interested in the work.

Allan Sutherland



Daredevil



Not being a comic fan, I was ready to grab 40 winks through *Marvel* hero Daredevil's big screen adventure. If I had, I would have missed the most fun I've had at the flicks for ages.

As a child, Matt Murdock (Ben Affleck, *right*) makes a pledge with his father to defend "the weak" against the bad. After he is blinded by a flying barrel of toxic waste, Matt's other senses are heightened to superhuman levels, allowing him to hear police radios from a mile away. He can also see outlines of people and buildings when it rains, leap across buildings and fight like a ninja.

Harnessing these talents, he turns into the nocturnal Daredevil, the thorn in every bad guy's side, especially arch villain Kingpin (BOO!), the crime overlord in Matt's neighbourhood, and the wonderfully demented Bullseye, replete with cross-hair tattoo on his forehead. It doesn't take a genius to work out where the film goes, with plenty of action and punch-ups between our



hero, assisted by heroine Electra, and the baddies.

The references to Matt's blindness would, if not in a cartoon film, have him looking like supercrip. But this is a cartoon film, and he uses his gifts to devastating effect and is left at the end to go about his business of keeping the baddies at bay. Refreshingly, he doesn't want to be "cured".

Daredevil makes no pretences to be anything other than fun, and it succeeds enormously. And, hey, it's great to have a disabled superhero.

Dan Batten

Coming up



On the Line, a group of poets from SWALLOW (South Wansdyke Learning and Living Our Way), perform their debut show, 8 March, 7pm, at the Somer Centre, Midsomer Norton. SWALLOW is partly run by people with learning difficulties. Tickets are £4/£2.50 from Bath Literature Festival box office, tel: 01225 463362.



Graeae Theatre Company and Unicorn is presenting *Diary of an Action Man*, a new play for seven to 11-year-olds. The play is accessible to deaf and visually impaired children and is on national tour, including London, Salford and Nottingham, 13 February-6 April. See review, DN April. Tel: 020 7700 7208, e-mail: will@unicorntheatre.com



The Outlookers theatre company presents *Ronnie and Julie*, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, 10-11 March, at the Gala Theatre in Durham. The play focuses on the relationship between a young man and a disabled girl, and the effect their relationship has on those around them. For information, tel: 0191 332 4041, minicom: 0191 388 2418.

Picture this



Only two more months to go for this year's Freedom in Focus photography competition.

If you fancy winning up to £500, a camera, £200 towards a photography course of your choice or a trip on the London Eye, then get clicking.

This year's categories, Nature and Modern Life, can be interpreted any way you like, but judges are looking for photos showing creativity and personal expression.

Winners and runners-up will be chosen for each category, with two age groups each (18 and over and under 18).



2002 runner-up Steven Martin

The closing date is 30 April 2003. For an entry form and a copy of the rules, tel: 020 7619 7319, or go to www.disabilitynow.org.uk



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But if the idea of meeting this challenge is giving you sleepless nights, don't despair! Informative and friendly help is available from Access Made Easy (AME).

AME is a disability consultancy which was set up in January 2000 to undertake Access to Work assessments for Jobcentreplus and to provide disability awareness training to the public, private and voluntary sectors. The company's 2 founding partners, Andy Taylor and Tom O'Sullivan are both visually impaired and between them, have notched up over 20 years' experience of working on the frontline with disabled clients.

Whatever your concerns are over complying with the DDA – whether it's employment or making your services and premises accessible – Andy and Tom will be able to offer your organisation constructive and practical advice.

Access Made Easy understands the anxiety that new legislation like the DDA can cause, so to allay your fears, AME is offering Disability Awareness Training Courses at very competitive rates. Andy Taylor and Tom O'Sullivan will lead the sessions which will last either a full or half day and their aim is to provide you with a full understanding of your obligations under the Act and to give you workable solutions.

Other services available from AME include Information Technology/Access Technology training, Audio & Braille Transcription and Employment Assessments.

To find out more, please phone either Andy or Tom on 0208 507 8841 or alternatively, visit the Access Made Easy website at www.accessmadeeasy.co.uk

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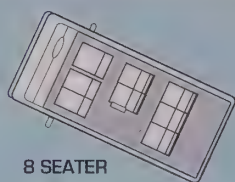
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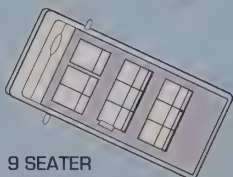
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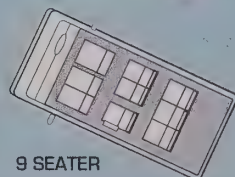
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8 SEATER



9 SEATER



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* Vehicle shown is 1.9 JTD ELX model.
* Price shown is for 1.2 MPI BV SX model.

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In good taste

Paul Biggs is executive head chef of Fosters Event Catering in Bristol. After leaving school, he took a two-year, full-time catering course at Brunel Technical College, where he became the first student for seven years to gain a distinction in restaurant service. After three months at Dukes Hotel in Bath, he joined Fosters as a commis chef. He has been with Fosters for 19 years, and was promoted to the post of executive head chef in 2000. The highlight of his career was being presented to the Queen on Maundy Thursday, 1999, after he had cooked her and 80 guests a banquet at Bristol's Mansion House.

I love the challenges set for me as a chef. Few feelings are better than when a customer praises your food or personally writes to thank you for a memorable meal.

Although I cannot hear properly, it does not stop me from having a good palate and knowing what good food should taste like. Being able to taste new dishes day in day out is a joy.

Being a chef, I have had enjoyment along with some serious issues. I like the daily negotiations with suppliers, travelling to cook, and achieving the near impossible by planning a menu and preparing dishes for 200 people.

I would be lying if I said there weren't any problems

caused by being deaf, but the important thing is how you deal with those problems.

If you work hard and show people what you have to offer, the rest will hopefully follow. You do find yourself hitting one hurdle after another, but this just gives you the chance to prove yourself.

My main problem is telephone conversations. I would love to hear word for word what someone was saying on the other end. But it is a case of accepting the problem and choosing the best way around it, whether it is a textphone, fax machine or computer.

One thing I have learned is not to sit back and let things happen. I have needed to stop

worrying that other people won't trust you to do the job because you are deaf. Even people with full hearing have to prove themselves.

I have also sought advice to help me cope with this job.

Working in a big kitchen can sometimes be tricky, especially if someone is calling me. I overcome this by working with a colleague, so they can alert me if I am needed. I also try to face the rest of the kitchen when I am working, so I can see if someone is trying to attract my attention.

Ordering takes up a lot of my attention. I choose to fax. Telling people you have a hearing disability is important. If there is a need for someone to phone, another member of staff interprets for me.

There is a high chance that you will be involved in a fire drill at some stage of being a chef, so I always explain that I need to be told if an alarm is going off.

Being deaf and cooking at home shouldn't cause many problems, apart from safety

When the stock has reduced to 2 litres, remove from heat and pass through a fine sieve. Place back on the heat and keep at a gentle simmer.

Melt the butter in a heavy based pan and stir in the flour to make a roux. Cook slowly for 5 minutes then, using a whisk, pour the stock onto the roux while whisking hard. Bring back to a gentle simmer, season and cook for 20 minutes at least.

When ready to serve, add the sliced chicken, tongue, mushrooms, reserved mushroom liquor and cream. Add lemon and chopped parsley to finish.

peppercorns, thyme and bay leaves. Bring to boil, skimming all the time. Simmer gently until chicken is cooked (45 mins approx). If the juice runs clear when the thigh is pierced, the chicken should be ready. Allow to cool. Pass the chicken stock through a fine sieve and place on stove.

Peel the mushrooms and remove the stalks. Put all the stalks in the stock. Remove chicken meat from the bone and shred finely. Do the same with the tongue. Slice the mushroom caps into 1½ inch strips and cook in a little butter, water and lemon juice. Drain and reserve juice.

sharpness level is reached.

Some bubbles might appear on surface – scoop them off. Cover and set aside or put in fridge overnight.

To make the pastry, place flour and castor sugar in bowl and mix together. Add butter and mix on slowest setting using dough hook or beater (dough hook preferable). You can also rub the fat in by hand.

When mixture resembles crumb-like appearance, add egg and continue mixing until it forms a dough.

The pastry needs to rest for at least a couple of hours or preferably overnight.

Roll out pastry until 3mm thick. Line an 8in/20cm flan

case, pressing pastry to the edges. Trim off excess.

Line the pastry with baking parchment and fill with baking beans.

Bake in a slow oven, gas 3/4, until pastry has dried out on the bottom. Remove beans and lining.

Pour lemon filling into case then place back in the oven on the same heat.

The tart is ready when the middle of the mixture springs back when you lightly press it (approx 35 mins).

Remove from oven, cool, chill and cut. Serve with crème fraîche and a red berry coulis, or mascarpone with stem ginger, or simply on its own.



issues. Double check appliances – especially gas – as you may not hear it escaping if a switch is left on. Being alert is important, because you will not hear liquids about to boil over or hot bubbling fat about to catch fire. And try not to enrol in a workplace where shouting is the common method of communication. There are ways around it.

I consider myself very lucky to have been supported so well

by Fosters. Although they insist I reached my position entirely on merit, I am very grateful for their help and backing. Without this, I may not have reached the position I have today. I hope other catering establishments can read this article and see how well Fosters understand people with disabilities. They may be surprised by how such policies could benefit their own businesses in the long run.

Crème Agnes Sorel

Ingredients

- 100g cooked ox tongue
- 1 whole chicken (approx 1.2kg/1.5kg raw weight)
- 750g vegetables for stock (carrots, leeks, celery, onions)
- 500g field mushrooms
- 125g butter
- 125g plain flour
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 peppercorns
- 4 fl oz cream

Serves about 8

Place chicken in a roomy pan and cover with cold water. Peel and dice vegetables for stock and add to pan, along with

Baked Lemon Tart

Filling

- ¾pt double cream
- 12 egg yolks
- zest of 2 lemons
- juice of 3 lemons
- sugar to taste

Pastry

- 200g plain flour
- 125g butter, cut into cubes and slightly softened
- 50g castor sugar

Serves about 8

Mix cream into egg yolks. Softly whisk lemon zest and juice into the mixture.

Add sugar in small amounts, mixing each time and frequently tasting until correct sweetness/

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ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

Dear Ann

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides.

Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Try and try again

I see myself as a failure. I left school with no certificates. It took me ages to get a job and then I found myself in an office where I seemed to get all the ropery things to do like filing. To cap it all, I am disabled and people always seem to see the disability before they see me.

Paul, Maidenhead

I am not at all surprised that your disability defines you in your colleagues' eyes. After all, if you see yourself as a failure and blame your disability, what do you expect?

Start looking at all the positive attributes about yourself – yes, of course you have positive attributes.

Take up an absorbing hobby as well. Find an interesting evening class where you will be able to share a new view of life, forget about yourself for a while and perhaps even get a qualification.

Remember, if you take advantage of every failure, you can change course and find success. Peter Florence, founder of the Hay Festival, said: "Ever tried? Ever failed? No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."

Move on up

I thought I had a great marriage. I was so in love. But it hasn't worked out. We're divorcing and I am devastated. I'm ashamed, too, and I don't know where to turn. My family just doesn't understand.

Margaret, Wigan

I am so sorry to hear about your problems and I can understand just how awful you feel. But, whatever you do, don't feel ashamed. We are living in an age when, as individuals, we don't accept the half-marriages our forebears coped with. As men and women we are learning to accept each other as real people and not the stereotypical images of male and female which have existed throughout the centuries. This often pro-

vokes serious confrontation, when we insist on our individuality rather than on the standard roles that others try to force on us.

I suggest you explore www.ondivorce.co.uk, where you will find information and support. You will also find comfort from others in similar situations to yourself. I recommend that, when you reach the website, you also click on to "Friends Network". As well as chatting online, some groups of divorcees around the country get together for a meal or an outing. These are always accessible for disabled people.

Try to use this experience, awful as it is, as a way to move forward to what could well be a worthwhile new life.

Taxi troubles

I am disabled and use a lightweight mini scooter that fits into a hatchback car. I go into the nearest town at least twice a week, where I work in a charity shop and help in the parish church gift shop.

Until recently, I was able to use a taxi to take me and my scooter to town, but now the driver, who was always very reliable, has retired. There are other taxi firms nearby with estate cars which could easily accommodate both me and my scooter, but unfortunately they say they can't help me. What should I do?

Christine, Louth

I assume the other taxi drivers are unwilling to lift your scooter into the vehicle.

I rang a taxi organisation and was told it would be necessary for you to contact the taxi licensing office at your local council and discuss the difficulties with them. You could also contact the nearest disability organisation, who

may be able to advise you – your library will give you details.

Might it be a good idea to ask the parish church gift shop if you could put an advert in the parish magazine to seek a voluntary driver? Also the people who run the charity shop might have ideas of how they could publicise your need. You never know, a retired person might have a suitable vehicle and be prepared to take you on your journeys.

Painful problem

Can you help with a very embarrassing problem? I have awful trouble every month managing my periods. Do you know of any companies which make tampon inserters?

Sylvia, Glasgow

I understand that Chailey

Heritage Clinical Services make an inserter. Do let me know if it works for you.

Will they want me?

Although I'd love to go out to work, I am afraid that employers will turn me away because I'm disabled and because they may be required to make adjustments for me.

John, Reigate

As you may know, larger employers (those with more than 15 employees) must treat disabled applicants for jobs on an equal basis with everyone else.

It is also worth knowing that anyone with a health condition or disability that affects the type of work they can do, and which is likely to last for 12 months or more, may be eligible for help from the Access to Work scheme. For instance, it can pay towards a support worker such as a reader, specialist equipment, and adaptations to premises or existing equipment, and help with travel costs. You can get more information from your local Jobcentre Plus.

www.ondivorce.co.uk, 36 Grange Road, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS9 2HS, tel: 01702 475130, e-mail: mail@ondivorce.co.uk

Chailey Heritage Clinical Services, Beggars Wood, North Chailey, Nr Lewes, East Sussex BN8 4EF, tel: 01825 722112, fax: 01825 727729.

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BAIDER

Help at the end of the phone



DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psychotherapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

Bright ideas

Anne Davies recommends kitchen equipment she's tried and tested

When the Good Housekeeping Institute announced their Innovation of the Year Awards winners in December, three of the five products were for the kitchen:

Neff's new, single, built-in oven (B1881, £800 approx), with an "up and under" slide away door, makes it easier to put in and take out dishes. Could be useful for wheelchair users or anyone with restricted movement. Tel: 08705 133090, www.neff.co.uk



Haden's Vista basic jug kettle (£12.99) is cordless, with spout filling, an easy-to-use hinged lid, washable filter and two easy-to-view indicators. For stockists tel: 0845 658 9700.



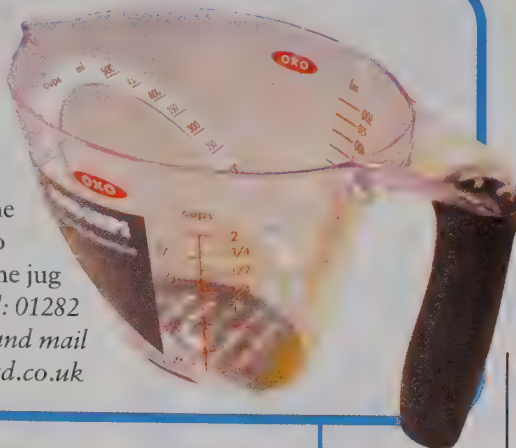
Kellogg's Easi Pour (£3.99) stops you from pouring cornflakes all over the table. This gadget slips over the top of the packet and keeps contents fresh with a sliding lid. There's also a wide handle on the side and the top is corrugated so you can get a grip with your thumb. Mine arrived on the box, but someone with weak hands may have difficulty fitting it. The Easi Pour fits a 500g box of cornflakes and a 450g rice krispies, but new sizes are under development. Available from Lakeland Plastics and Sainsbury's. www.lakelandlimited.com tel: 01539 488100.



Anything Left-Handed has a new Victorinox swivel peeler (£2.25) and its traditional milk pan has been upgraded to have a pouring lip on both sides, making it suitable for left or right-hand use (£9.95). Tel: 020 7437 3910, www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk

SEE "UP FOR GRABS" ON PAGE 43 FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN SOME OF THESE PRODUCTS!

The OXO Good Grips measuring jug has an angled measuring scale so you can check the quantity as you fill the jug without having to bend down or raise the jug to eye level. £5.29, tel: 01282 613644 for stockists and mail order, or www.jwpltd.co.uk



The Dexam Orka Miracle Mitt oven glove, made from flexible silicone, is waterproof and resistant to temperatures up to 300°C. £15.99 www.dexam.co.uk

Do you like to sip coffee or soup slowly, without it going cold? Then try Cucina's new double-walled mug (£11), a very stylish, insulated, stainless steel mug that also comes with a spill-resistant lid and non-slip base. Tel: 020 8246 4311, www.cucinadirect.com



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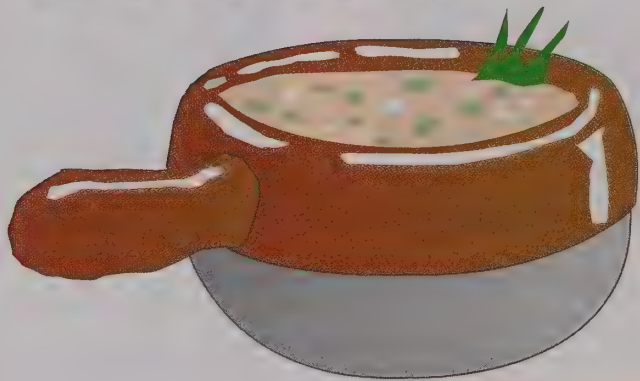
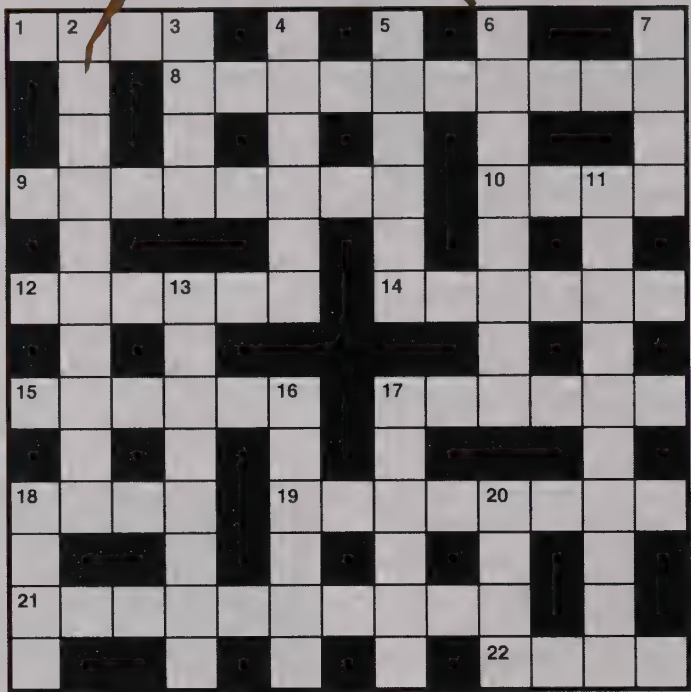
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ACROSS

- 1. Male voice in the lowest range (4)
- 8. Not entitled to be chosen (10)
- 9. And 17 Down, 13 Down, 14 Across. 2003, in other words (8,4,2,8,6)
- 10. Spell of military duty (4)
- 12. New David Cronenberg film starring Ralph Fiennes (6)
- 14. See 9 Across.
- 15. Humiliating failure (6)
- 17. _____ of the Guard, a member of the British sovereign's bodyguard (6)
- 18. Country's largest charity for visually impaired people (4)
- 19. Disease in which sugar and starch are not properly metabolized by the body (8)
- 21. Italian soup (10)
- 22. Area of water swirling in a circular movement (4)

DOWN

- 2. The taking of the Virgin Mary in bodily form into heaven (10)
- 3. Airtight structure in which green crops are stored for fodder (4)
- 4. Bright, moving body from outer space (6)
- 5. Carry off a person illegally to hold for ransom (6)
- 6. Highly skilled musician (8)
- 7. Pudsey, the Children in Need symbol (4)
- 11. Made without yeast (10)
- 13. See 9 Across.
- 16. *Space _____*, an early hit by David Bowie (6)
- 17. See 9 Across.
- 18. Cut of meat from an animal's hindquarters (4)
- 20. Sharp-pointed sword used in fencing (4)

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN
ILLUSTRATION BY JAMIE TROUNCE
ANSWERS ON PAGE 36

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CANDID DAN

Dan's back, contemplating life as a luvvie's widow

As we're in March, it seems odd to be discussing plans for 2003. But seeing as this is my first column of the year I thought it churlish not to.

My first (and only) resolution was to make no New Year's resolutions, having looked at my vices and finding myself far too attached to them. Instead, I promised quietly to (I thought) myself, that Beck and I would take plenty of short breaks as well as a longer holiday. I was obviously louder than I thought, as madam's ears pricked up in an instant, rattling off Amsterdam, Lake District and Devon as potential destinations faster than you could say "overdraft limited exceeded". Maybe she should consider a career in espionage, owning such a razor sharp set of shell likes.

A more likely career for her at the moment is on the stage, having landed the part of Mrs Noah in the biblically inspired Chester mystery plays this summer. I'm bracing myself for hours of being a rehearsal homework "buddy" and repetitions of "how does it sound?" to the point where I could be an understudy.

With many weekend rehearsals for Beck, I shall have to find ways to amuse myself. I predict many an hour will be eased away watching the battle for the premiership between Man United and Arsenal, either in the safety of my own living room, or, if I'm feeling brave, in my local, situated yards away from the home of the "enemy". I shall be cheering Fergie's men and shouting unrepeatable things at Monsieur Wenger's brood with equal vigour, hoping that the Becks wearing number 7 and in the bottle in front of me should make the "ordeal" of being a theatre "widow" more than bearable.

INDEPENDENCE

2nd - 3rd April 2003

Independent LIVING SCOTLAND
SECC • Scotland



Emap Healthcare will hold Independent Living Scotland at the SECC, Glasgow, 2-3 April. Aimed at disabled and older

people and healthcare professionals, the free exhibition will feature over 100 stands, including leading equipment manufacturers Adjustamatic Beds, Chiltern Invadex and Mangar International. You can also pick the brains of experts from organisations including the Disabled Living Foundation, Arthritis Care Scotland and Accessible Travel and Leisure. And while you're about, why not visit the DN stand (A16) as well?

As well as equipment, a series of seminars will run alongside the exhibition. For healthcare professionals subjects include a focus on physiotherapy in Scotland, the Adults with Incapacities Act and equipment and adaptations, while public information seminars include simple massage for boosting mobility and natural ways to cope with multiple sclerosis and arthritis.

There are ways to make negotiating the exhibition easier, including a free show guide available in Braille, large print, audio cassette and standard print. A number of powered wheelchairs, scooters and wheelchairs will be available free of charge on a first come, first served basis and sign language interpreters are available to accompany you around the exhibition. Accessible toilets will be available in the hall.

The SECC can be found off junction 19 of the M8 motorway, where directions to the venue are clearly marked. Enter off Finnieston Street for car parks with 2,750 spaces. Car parking for blue and orange badge holders is given priority next to the entrance to Hall 3 and costs £3. If you're going as a group, there are dedicated coach parks with space for 20 coaches. If you're coming by train, travel west on the low level from Glasgow Central to the Exhibition Centre. Trains from Central Station run every 20 minutes, and free, adapted, courtesy buses will be provided to and from the Glasgow Central and Queen Street Train Stations and Glasgow Central Bus Station. Buses will run approximately every half-hour on Wednesday 2 April from 9.30am to 5pm and on Thursday 3 April from 9.30am to 4.30pm.

For your free ticket, Tel: 0870 429 4372, website: www.independentlivingevents.co.uk

Publications

Christian Deaf Link UK has published *Sign Me In*, a policy document designed to improve access to church life for deaf people. Aimed at church leaders, signers in churches and deaf people, the policy looks at different areas of church life, including Sunday meetings, social activities, conferences and training and includes guidelines and case studies to illustrate issues raised. £3. Minicom: 01268 743180, voice/fax 01268 743261, email: deafinkjp@aol.com

Mobility World has published *The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA): your role and responsibilities as a service provider*. Aimed at facility managers, small businesses, property owners and anyone responsible for premises open to the public, it explains how the Act will affect their work when the next part of the DDA is introduced in 2004, what constitutes discrimination and what happens if a service provider

discriminates against disabled people. Free. Tel: 0870 740 7782, email: enq@mobilityworld.co.uk

Remploy has published *Think Again*, a guide for police staff on dealing with disabled people. The guide includes advice on how to recognise signs of disability when people may appear uncommunicative, how to give disabled people extra time to do things when interviewing or filling in forms and how to find the method of communication that suits the disabled person. It also gives advice on appropriate language to use when talking to a disabled person. Free. Tel: 0845 845 2211, email: dda-info@remploy.co.uk

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What's on

The Disabled Living Centres Council (DLCC) in association with the Associate Members Committee of the College of Occupational Therapists will hold an Introduction to Equipment for Easier Living, Bristol 4 March, Edinburgh 13 March, Manchester 26 March and Dunstable 31 March. Aimed at occupational therapy support workers, the sessions are designed to give people an introduction to equipment issues, including a tour of a disabled living centre which will highlight standard equipment used by health and social services, a demonstration of key products and items, funding streams and other sources of information. £70 for BAOT (The British Association of Occupational Therapists) or DLCC members, £90 for non-members. Tel: 0161 834 1044.

Carers UK will hold Carers and Mental Health Law, Glasshouse Yard, London, 18 March. Aimed at those who work with people with mental health problems and their carers, the course will

provide an overview of the laws and procedures that affect them, as well as procedures under the 1983 Mental Health Act, guardianship and supervised discharge, and the national service framework for mental health. Contact Chris Hockley, tel: 020 7566 7632.

The Royal Society of Medicine Wales and the **Dyscovery Centre Cardiff** will hold Specific Learning Difficulties – A Health Issue?, 19 March, College of Medicine, University of Wales. The meeting will give a multi-disciplinary overview of specific learning difficulties from health, educational and parental perspectives and will discuss areas including diagnostic criteria, management at school age and clinical intervention. Contact Georgina Brodie, tel: 020 7290 2900, email: wales@rsm.ac.uk

The National Autistic Society will hold Living with Asperger Syndrome (AS), 26 March, Regents College Conference Centre, Regents Park, London. Aimed at

professionals and parents, the conference aims to give delegates an insight into the personal experiences of people with AS as well as professional perspectives on the support and education of people with AS and their partners and families. Professionals £99, parents £60. Deadline for booking: 19 March. Tel: 0115 911 3367, email: conferences@nas.org.uk

The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society will hold This is Your Life, Newquay, 12 April, Croydon 20 September, Flintshire, 4 October and Colchester, 1 November. The days will provide up to date information on MS and in depth information sessions looking at continence management, carers caring for themselves (open to carers only), cognitive problems and tips for coping, and physiotherapy in the management of MS. £20 waged, £10 unwaged. Contact the conference team, tel: 020 8438 0700.

Springboard UK, an organisation which promotes careers in

hospitality, leisure, tourism and travel, will hold careers fairs aimed at disabled people as part of their careers festival, Holiday Inn, Milton Keynes, and Le Meridien Hotel, Piccadilly, London 3 April. The fairs will offer careers advice from companies including the Hilton, Jarvis, Marriott and Thistle hotel chains as well as the chance to apply for vacancies and work experience. Festival Hotline, tel: 0900 777 1009 (calls cost 50p per minute) email: info.festival@springboarduk.org.uk

Essex Coalition of Disabled people will hold a young disabled persons' forum, Waterfront Place, Colchester 23 April. The day, for 13 to 25 year olds with physical, sensory, mental health problems or learning difficulties, aims to raise discussion on independent living, and will examine how young disabled people can participate in decision making and empowerment. Contact Aindrie Reece-Sheerin, Tel: 01245 382176, email: aindrie@ecdpc.co.uk

Website

The Disabled Workers Co-operative is a not for profit organisation set up to promote products and services offered by disabled people. Their new website holds a searchable database of disabled people throughout the UK offering a wide range of skills or services, which disabled individuals, sheltered workshops, charities or companies employing a significant number of disabled people can register with for free. Links to websites can be submitted in a web directory, and there is a discussion forum where people can post requests. www.disabledworkers.org.uk

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1. Bass
8. Ineligible 9. European
10. Tour 12. Spider 14. People
15. Fiasco 17. Yeoman
18. RNIB 19. Diabetes
21. Minestrone 22. Eddy
DOWN: 2. Assumption
3. Silo 4. Meteor 5. Kidnap
6. Virtuoso 7. Bear
11. Unleavened 13. Disabled
16. Oddity 17. Year of
18. Rump 20. Epee

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Special prices late April/May
Offering panoramic views over St Ouens Bay. Apartments with disabled facilities, accommodating 2-8 persons.
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website: <http://jerseyisland.com/stbrelade/lorocco>

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3 wheelchair friendly single-storey holiday cottages in beautiful rural location.
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Bonneuil Cottages S.W.France**– Enlightened Self-Interest –**

Individuals, families, charities and health trusts – make holidays easy. Own or share in the ownership of a holiday home designed specifically for people with disabilities.
For further details contact:
Bonneuil Holiday Project, 53 Woodville Road, Mumbles, Swansea SA3 4AE.

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IN THE PARKLAND GROUNDS OF STRODE PARK, HERNE, KENT
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Provides an excellent holiday for the disabled person and their family. We have full disabled facilities and are able to cater for organised parties. All wheelchair accessible rooms open on to a private garden with conservatory and have breathtaking sea views. Private car park with unloading at entrance to the hotel. Open all year.
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Charming cottage in Dordogne region available for rent. Reasonable rates. If you are looking for peace and quiet, warm weather, good food and wine, this is the place for you.
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Near Salisbury – newly converted stable block self-catering units.

Ground floor 1 double/twin bedroom en-suite wheel-in shower. Upstairs 1 double, 1 single, shower room. Open plan kitchen & living room. Patio & shared garden. ETB category 2, 4-star highly commended. Non-smoking. Prices from £195 pw. Available all year. Tel: 01722 349002, e-mail: mail@old-stables.co.uk, www.old-stables.co.uk

BRYN MEIRION LODGE

Amlwch Road, Benllech, Anglesey, North Wales, LL74 8SR. Tel: 01248 853118
Hotel adapted for wheelchair users.
Ensuite specialised rooms with ceiling hoists and electric beds.
Also available 1 self-catering unit.
Book now to avoid disappointment.

Willow Cottage – The Black Isle, 5 mins drive Inverness.

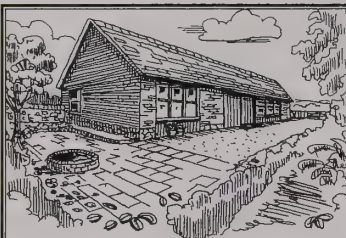
Beautifully equipped, Tourist Board 3 stars with Disability Award 2.
1 double, 1 twin, both ensuite. Situated on a working croft amid lovely scenery with wildlife park close by. Moray Firth dolphins, kites, buzzards, deer etc. and our Nussal Inverness offers good food, cinema, theatre etc.
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CAREWELL HOLIDAYS

Looking for a happy suitable holiday?
We specialize in finding suitable accommodation for disabled persons of all abilities, age groups, and interests.
We can also arrange assistance from health care professionals if required. For information on booking a holiday in accessible self-catering cottages, hotels, or farm house B&Bs please ring and speak to a holiday adviser.
Tel: 01437 563565, email: info@carewellholidays.co.uk
www.carewellholidays.co.uk
To find out about listing your accommodation please contact us.

North York Moors National Park

Moonpenny Cottage, Levisham, nr Pickering. Self-catering cottage – sleeps 4. Fully equipped to a very high standard and designed specifically to accommodate the wheelchair user as well as the able bodied. South facing and over-looking paddock and hills beyond. Full details/brochure from Mrs Amicia Bentley
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Category 1, National Accessible Scheme.

**Take a break at Jay's Barn**

Jay's Barn (sleeps 4) has been specifically designed & rebuilt for disabled people. Beautifully situated in its own grounds/garden. Easy access to Alton Towers, Peak District, The Potteries, or enjoy a visit to one of the level routes in the locality. Open all year. £230 off peak £300 peak per week. Also short-term lets. 1 double bedroom, single wheelchair users welcome. Payphone, no smoking, no pets (guide dogs accepted), linen and towels provided.
ETB 3* Level 1 National Access Scheme.
Ring Christine Babb on 01889 507444.
Jay's Barn, Bradley in the Moors, near Alton, Staffordshire Moorlands ST10 4DF.
email: jaysbarn@lineone.net www.jaysbarn.co.uk

The Algarve, Portugal

Small hotel owned and run by English family. Home from home. Happy and friendly. Home cooked food. Diets catered for. All bedrooms en-suite. Our own swimming pool and grass bowling green. Golfing bookings can be made. We are fully equipped for wheelchair users, their families and friends. Met at Faro airport. For brochures and flights with A.T.O.L. agents, tel: 01235 521804

NAISH HOLIDAY VILLAGE:

Cliff-top park with "excellent" status. New Milton, Hampshire. Excellent site facilities within 100 yards, with indoor/outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, two bedroom fully wheelchair accessible, log cabin accommodation. Sleeps 6. Well furnished. Free club membership.

GRANGE COURT HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Park with "good" status, Goodrington Sands, Devon. Excellent site facilities within short walk, with indoor/outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, 2 bedroom, fully wheelchair accessible mobile home. Sleeps 4-6, well appointed. Free club membership. (Purchased with funds from the National Lottery).

Details: Mr P Cash, tel: (01425) 672055 Bournemouth Spina Bifida Association. Registered Charity No. 261914.

Woodhead Cottage**Dulnain Bridge, Speyside.**

Cosy cottage by private woodland setting with attractive bird/wildlife. Great Highland holiday/touring base. Highest disabled category STB approved. 3 bedrooms, one with ensuite ceiling track/hoist to bed, toilet and bath. Level wheel-in chair shower, highly recommended by wheelchair user. Sleeps 6. For brochure contact: Ian & Catriona Shearer, tel: 01479 851298.

Norfolk, Nar Valley Holiday Cottages

3 self-catering, all wheelchair accessible, 1 with wheel-in shower room, 2 with airbaths. Mostly en-suite. On working farm - peaceful location, central for beaches and tourist attractions. Indoor heated swimming pool. Also B&B.
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Full wheelchair access**Acres of beautiful grounds**

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Email: book@ashwellthorpehall.org.ukSee us at: www.ashwellthorpehall.org.uk**Luxury B&B in Shropshire**

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Telephone Heather and Dave 01743 874660

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www.mobilityabroad.co.uk

Central Devon: 3 comfortable ground floor manor farmhouse apartments, wheelchair accessible. Picturesque, peaceful situation, on-site coarse fishing. Half mile Crediton, 8 miles Exeter. No smoking/pets. Ideal holiday base. Optional extra breakfast.
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Lots of villas, farmhouses, bungalows, hotels, B&B, car hire with hand controls, adapted vans and plenty to see and do.
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"Holiday Care Award Winners"
Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service.

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Great self-catering in South West Wales**Sŵn-y-Gwynt Cottage**

Sleeps 4, fabulous views, flawless luxury. TV, linen, power all included.
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Villa with sea and mountain views situated in a quiet village, 15 minutes drive away from tourist area. The villa sleeps up to 9 people, is wheelchair friendly with wheel-in shower. Mobility Aids available. Solar heated swimming pool with ramp. Further details contact Tel: 00 34 928 838065. Website: www.casabellapalms.net

CYPRUS – Paphos & Polis

Villas/cottages, some "disabled friendly" for 2-10 persons.
Own pools. Phone Irene: 020 8440 6219 www.irisvillas.com

• Recruitment (on pages 38 to 42)



INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

HALF-TIME DISABILITY CO-ORDINATOR

Based in the Student Welfare Office, the Disability Co-ordinator will provide an effective resource and referral support service for disabled students and will take a lead role in developing the Institute's policy and strategy in this area.

The co-ordinator will act as the Project Manager for the HEFCE-funded disability project to improve provision for disabled students, overseeing the project and providing advice to disabled students on needs and entitlements. The co-ordinator will also undertake a review of current student provision, developing further the Institute's policies and procedures in these areas.

Knowledge and experience of disability issues, including the legal framework, and have an understanding of the issues facing disabled students wishing to enter the Higher Education setting are essential. A strong commitment to equal opportunities and awareness and appreciation on how these issues relate to staff and students in higher education and a first degree or an equivalent qualification or relevant experience are also essential.

The appointment will be 0.5 of full-time and will be for three years in the first instance. Salary will be in the range pro-rata of £23,259 to £26,255 per annum, inclusive.

For an application form and further details please ring 020 7612 6159 (24-hour ansaphone) quoting reference A2/R or e-mail personnel@ioe.ac.uk Please do not send CVs at this stage. Completed applications to be returned to the Personnel Department, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL by 3rd March 2003.

*Committed to Equality***DCS MEDIATION UK DISABILITY CONCILIATION SERVICE**

Mediation UK represents and supports mediation in the community and runs the independent national Disability Conciliation Service (DCS) on behalf of the Disability Rights Commission. DCS is a unique service for people with disputes arising out of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Parts III & IV. DCS provides people with an opportunity to resolve disputes through conciliation rather than through the courts. DCS seeks:

Part time (17.5 hours)
CONCILIATION CO-ORDINATOR

Pro rata £25251

This challenging casework management role offers a great opportunity to develop your career and to make a real practical difference within a dynamic and purposeful team

Closing date: **24/3/03** Interview date: **9/4/03**

Applicants need to show evidence of commitment to equality issues. All disabled people who meet the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.

For a job information pack (also available in large print, disk, audio, Braille, data, etc, please state requirements) contact: Recruitment, Disability Conciliation Service, 3rd Floor, St Lawrence House, Bristol BS1 2HF or email: andy.m@dcs-gb.org



DCS is a service of
Mediation UK

Manager

Salary: circa £25500

DLCC leads a network of equipment information and advice centres throughout the UK that offer disabled and older people opportunities to make informed decisions about the products they use. Demand for our services is growing and we are now looking for a dynamic, motivational manager to lead our small staff team, based in Manchester.

If you are resourceful and have energy and drive you will enjoy working with our committed team. You should have previous management experience, excellent communication skills and be a good organiser. You will be responsible for managing resources, the smooth running of our organisation, developing membership services and raising funds. Initially a one year contract, renewable subject to review funding.

For an Information Pack please contact:

The Administrator, DLCC, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Manchester, M8 8QA, Tel: 0161 834 1044, Fax: 0161 839 0802, email: Tracey@dlcc.org.uk

Closing Date: **10th March 2003**

Interviews week beginning: 17th March 2003

Visit: www.dlcc.org.uk

The Disabled Living Centres Council

dlcc



• Recruitment (on pages 38 to 42)

CONSERVATOIRE FOR DANCE AND DRAMA

Disability Officer • £28,000 pro rata for 0.6 post • Central London

The CDD, which provides conservatoire level vocational training, wishes to appoint a part-time Disability Officer for three years to devise and implement all aspects of the CDD's disability policies and procedures.

Knowledge and experience of working with students, artists and/or teachers with a range of disabilities is essential and the ideal candidate will have a strong performing arts background.

Applications are by CV and covering letter.

For further information and a job specification, please contact Julie Crofts at the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, 1-7 Woburn Walk, London, WC1H 0JJ, tel 020 7387 5101 or email laura.naldrett@theplace.org.uk

CDD is striving to be an equal opportunities employer

Application deadline: 27 February 2003

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Applicants must be 18+, demonstrate a genuine interest and knowledge of the industry and a practical understanding of the assistant's job, probably gained through work experience or working as a runner. This is a two year, full time, paid training scheme.

Application packs can be downloaded from our website on www.ft2.org.uk/recruit. Please print off, complete and return by mail. Alternatively send an A4 s.a.e. to the address below clearly marked for one of the above trainee positions. The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is 1 April.

FT2 particularly welcomes applications from women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities who are currently under-represented in the film and television industry.

4SKILLS

Additional places on the New Entrant Technical Training Programme are being sponsored by Channel 4 for people from ethnic minority backgrounds to encourage their greater representation within the film and television industry. Please apply as above.



FT2, fourth floor, warwick house, 9 warwick street, london w1b 5ly
website: www.ft2.org.uk

• Courses

University of Leeds Department of Sociology and Social Policy



Diploma/MA in Disability Studies

This unique, hugely popular and recently updated programme of study gives students the opportunity to work for either a Post Graduate Diploma in Disability Studies or the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Disability Studies. The Scheme covers both the theoretical and practical issues relevant to disablement and the disability experience. It is designed for people working in or planning a career in the general area of disability related services.

Candidates will normally have a first degree or equivalent professional qualification, but relevant experience will be taken into account where appropriate. This course is taught in an accessible location and the University welcomes disabled students.

THIS POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA/MA IN DISABILITY STUDIES PROGRAMME IS ALSO AVAILABLE AS AN OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING PACKAGE.

For further details please contact MARIE ROSS or DEBBIE WESTMORELAND in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds, LS2 9JT.

Tel: and Minicom (0113) 2334418 or (0113) 2334408

• Accommodation

Residential accommodation now available in Greater Manchester & Merseyside



Looking for comfortable, residential accommodation either for yourself or a client in Greater Manchester or Merseyside?

If your answer to this question is yes and you're visually impaired or have a physical disability, then Henshaws Society for Blind People's Pendleton Centre in Salford near Manchester or our Southport Residential Centre may be just what you're looking for.

Both centres are located in pleasant surroundings, convenient for shops, public transport and offer other amenities which exceed minimum care standards; these include fully-furnished flats, a friendly atmosphere, lots of social activities, a Rehabilitation Officer for visually impaired people and staff who are trained to cater for the needs of disabled residents.

If you're 19 or over and you want to find out more about either centre, please contact Sue Barlow on 0161 872 1234 or email sue.barlow@hsbp.co.uk

The Pendleton Centre, 232 Eccles Old Road, Salford M6 8AG. Tel: 0161 707 6747, email: pendleton@hsbp.co.uk

The Southport Centre, 105 Norwood Road, Southport PR8 6EL. Tel: 01704 533317 email: southport@hsbp.co.uk

For more information on Henshaws and the other services we provide, why not visit our website at www.hsbp.co.uk

disabilitynow fortnightly

DN EXTRA...

MAKING IT EASY FOR YOU

From April 03, you will no longer need to wait a month to advertise your vacancies. Should you miss the main issue of **disabilitynow**, you will now be able to advertise in the new mid-month supplement, **DN EXTRA...**

For more information, contact Patrick Durham-Matthews on 020 7619 7320, email: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

Environment Policy Access Officer

Grade PO2 £27,141 - £29,244 pa

Overcoming access barriers which disable many people is a high priority in Hammersmith and Fulham. We need a new Access Officer to take forward work that has been well established in the Environment Department for over a decade. The post is located in the Policy Group which deals with development planning, transportation projects, research and environmental improvement. The Access Officer has a wide brief, working with colleagues across the department and council, and liaising with the community and other organisations.

The successful applicant will combine customer care with an ability to develop a pro-active and strategic approach to securing an accessible environment. You will need to have a thorough understanding, and substantial experience, of identifying barriers to access and of advising on how to overcome them. You will be able to manage a complex workload that includes advising on planning applications, building access issues and public realm improvements. You will be able to communicate effectively on technical and non-technical matters with the public, designers and service providers.

For an application pack please: • Email address: charles.kennedy@lbhf.gov.uk • Tel: 020 8753 3415/ext. 3415 (24 hour voicemail). • Minicom: 020 8753 3369 (textphone for deaf and hearing impaired applicants only). • Or write to: Personnel, Environment Department, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Town Hall Ext., King Street, London W6 9JU. • CVs or faxed applications cannot be considered. • Job sharers welcome. • Please Quote Ref: PAO/ck. Closing date: 21 March 2003.

Visit the Council's website: www.lbhf.gov.uk and the Jobsearch website www.lgjobs.com



Hammersmith & Fulham
Serving our Community

HEREWARD COLLEGE Coventry

Hereward has a unique position in the further education sector as the national integrated college for residential and day students with and without disabilities.

An equal opportunity employer
with BS EN ISO 9002 accreditation.

Principal

c £65k

The College wishes to appoint a Principal to give leadership and direction at a vital stage in its development, building on the achievements of the last few years.

Applicants should have suitable experience in further education and managing diversity.

For further details, please contact the Human Resources Officer, Hereward College, Bramston Crescent, Tile Hill Lane, Coventry CV4 9SW. Telephone 024 7642 6126 e-mail MaryNind@hereward.ac.uk

Applications, which are welcomed from all sections of the community, should be returned by: 10th March 2003.



HEREWARD COLLEGE ... WE RECRUIT ON ABILITY

STANNAH PRIMA POWERCHAIR

J120 with kerb climber, purchased last year for £3,620, only used 6 times. Willing to sell for £1,800 ono. Tel: 01580 880752.

INVACARE MISTRAL PLUS, electric

wheelchair with charger. Full brochure, covers 25 miles with one charge. 5 speeds. Can be dismantled for transportation. 4 months old, hardly used. Extras including dual control, manual elevating leg rests, head rest. Full insurance still valid and under manufacturer's guarantee. Cost £3,470, asking only £2,500 for quick sell. Tel: 01432 820669 (Hereford) or mobile: 07968 334003.

HORIZON "MAYAN" 4-WHEEL scooter.

Top of range 4/8 mph, independent suspension Class 111, 40 stones, road lights. Cost £5,000 new, asking £2,750. Delivery possible. Tel: 01630 655825.

KP-25 KARMA FALCON powered

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PRIDE RISER RECLINER 670 chair, wine

colour, 6 months old. Excellent condition, cost £1,395, asking £900. Tel: 01375 677046 (Essex).

JAZZY 1120, VERY good condition

2001, used 9 months. £900. Tel: 07702 182752.

ELECTRONIC RECLINING CHAIR, never

been used. Immaculate condition. £450. Tel: 01264 889699.

RAINBOW REHAB FLEXMOBIL power-

chair, joystick control, 3 years' old. For indoor use with anti-tilt stabilisers for easy manouvre and charger. Asking £450 for quick sell. Tel: 01978 844431 (Wrexham).

TGA SUPERSPORT 3 big wheels, fun,

shopping, easy to drive, copes with 4" kerbs or rough ground. 8 mph, inclines to 1:5. Can be viewed on www.tga-electric.com 5 months' old, still under warranty. Cost £3,215, asking £1,995. Tel: 07803 922487.

SHOPRIDER ELECTRIC SCOOTER

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• Household/family

SUPER KING SIZE adjustamatic

bed with headboard. 7 feet long. Excellent condition, still under warranty, can be used with a Possum system. Genuine reason for sale. Cost £5,500 new, asking £3,500 ono. Tel: 01792 843121.

Cont'd pg 40 & 41

• Recruitment (on pages 38 to 42)

With an impressive client base and a growing reputation in the manufacturing and service sectors, the National Remploy Organisation is an increasingly successful business, as well as being the UK's largest provider of open and supported employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

As part of the continuing development of the Remploy 21 strategy and the modernisation of Remploy, we are now focusing on 11 National Business Streams where we have a sustainable competitive advantage and where we can generate good quality employment and development opportunities.

To apply for any salaried posts, please write with full CV and salary details, stating specific vacancy and preferred location, to: The HR Department, Remploy Ltd., Britannia Road, Banbury, Oxon OX16 5DP.

To be considered for this post only, simply call 02392 298686

Site Manager

Household & Toiletries – Based Radcliffe, North West
Up to £30,000 + Company Car/Benefits

As a specialist business, our Household & Toiletries division is a rapidly growing multi-site operation, producing and supplying an extensive range of high quality products. Based at our Radcliffe site, you'll oversee all day to day operations, with a brief to effectively manage the business and fully develop the workforce, in order to achieve improved performance and profitability, as well as an increase in customer satisfaction and sales growth.

With a heavy emphasis on establishing and sustaining lean manufacturing and continuous improvement practices, we'll expect you to fully maximise all available capacity and resources, with a view to developing additional and sustainable work opportunities for disabled people.

It's a challenging management role, requiring graduate calibre operations professional, with at least 5 years experience of profit/loss accountability, who can demonstrate a successful track record in this or an allied business sector. Proven line management capability, gained in a manufacturing environment and a strong sales/commercial focus are prerequisite.

Employment Development Advisors

Attractive Salary + Car Allowance
(i) Birmingham (ii) Black Country

Remploy Interwork is the external arm of the Employment Development Organisation within Remploy. As an integral member of the Field Operations team, you'll be responsible for the delivery of government programmes, designed to provide support and guidance to disabled people, through effective personal development planning, with the ultimate aim of achieving sustainable employment.

Working closely with Host Companies, you must be a first class communicator, with proven experience in a development or employment related role, who ideally has practical knowledge of working with the disabled, plus a good understanding of employment law and H&S regulations. However, above all, our main priority is your ability to assist in implementing progressive steps that enable individuals to progress in both skills and confidence.

Customer Service Assistants

Up to £14,340 - Newcastle under Lyme

Officescope is a fast developing multi-site operation, aiming to become the 1st choice partner for outsourced office services to internal and external customers across the UK.

Providing a key link between customers, our own sales team and in-house operations, you'll be a main point of contact, ensuring all enquiries are dealt with in a prompt and responsive manner, whilst also undertaking a growing element of telesales/marketing activity in support of business development.

Additional involvement with major accounts and associated administrative tasks, means you must be a confident communicator, from a customer service/call centre background, who has proven telemarketing/sales experience and excellent IT skills, including database maintenance.

Factory Operatives

Portsmouth - Carton & Box Manufacture (Packaging)
• Permanent Positions Immediate Start • £4.34 p.h. rising to £5.61 p.h. within 12 months • 36 hours – 4.5 day week

Are you disabled? Unemployed for 6 months or more?
Or are you on Incapacity Benefit?

Then this is your chance to join Remploy Packaging in Portsmouth.

Ideally, we're seeking some previous production experience, involving the setting and running of machinery, although full training is available if you can demonstrate good reading, writing and numeracy skills, along with plenty of enthusiasm.

In all cases, we can offer an attractive package and good conditions, but perhaps more importantly, the exciting prospect of joining an increasingly successful and well respected business.

Remploy



ELECTRICAL RECLINING CHAIR bought from HSL. At the press of a button opens out into a bed. Brown velvet. In excellent condition, will cost £800 new, asking £290 ono. Tel: 020 8888 0976.

HSL ADJUSTABLE BED with matching headboard and mattress, individually sprung. Including massage unit. Remote or manual control. Only used a couple of times, cost £1500 3 months ago, only asking £900 for quick sell. Tel: 01895 638523.

KUSCHALL CHAMPION FOLDING chair. 18" seat, tension back upholstery. Bought in Jan 2001 and hardly used. Immaculate condition - as new, £7500 ono. Tel: 020 7702 4986.

GINSON STAIRCLIMBER, FITS most manual wheelchairs. Excellent condition. £1,200 (£3,500 new). Tel: 029 2062 4229.

COMMODE BRAND NEW, cost £300, will accept £50. Back-swing relieves

back pain, cost £300, accept £50. Tel: 020 8767 2772.

• Lift

RATCLIFF WHEELCHAIR LIFT. 300kg swl. Currently installed in Renault Master near Harlow so can be seen working. Also floor tracking clamps and belts. £600ono. Karin 07817 611909.

Cont'd pg 41

• For Sale (Cont'd pg 41)

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

USED Versa
FROM **WIDNES CAR CENTRE**
THESE ARE JUST A SELECTION OF OUR FINE QUALITY USED VEHICLES
ALL VEHICLES ARE PREPARED AND VALETED
6 MONTHS WARRANTY
ALL SECURING EQUIPMENT INCLUDED

MAKE/MODEL	REG NO.	COLOUR	SPECIFICATION	MILEAGE	£
Renault Trafic 1.9 Diesel Versa	PJ02 VJX	Blue	4 seats, ramp, solo system	1,300	13,495
Renault Master 2.5 Diesel Versa	PO51 KVG	Blue	5 seats, tail lift	12,000	12,995
Nissan Vanette Versa 2.3 Dese	V214 DKC	Red	4 seats, ramp, winch	27,000	8,995
Nissan Vanette Versa 2.3 Dese	P269 PTU	Mt Blue	4 seats, tail lift	40,000	5,995
Toyota HiAce 2.4 Diesel	V553 MLG	Blue	4 seats, ramp	17,000	9,995
Toyota HiAce 2.4 Diesel	DA51 GPX	Aqua	4 seats, ramp, winch	18,000	11,995
VW 800 1.9 Turbo Diesel Versa LWB	V674 HHE	Blue	4 seats, tail lift	14,000	10,995
VW 800 1.9 Turbo Diesel Versa	T76 JKU	Green	4 seats, ramp	19,000	9,595
VW 800 1.9 Turbo Diesel Versa	Y905 DWL	Green	4 seats, ramp, winch	37,000	9,995
VW 800 2.5 Turbo Diesel Versa AUTO	V650 EWJ	Red	4 seats, ramp	25,000	10,795

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO ARRANGE A DEMONSTRATION CONTACT PHIL HAWKINS (USED VERSA SPECIALIST).

MONDAY - FRIDAY website: www.wheelchair-access.co.uk
9.00AM - 5.30PM e-mail: versa@wheelchair-access.co.uk



Motability
The leading car scheme for disabled people

VERSA SALES
WIDNES CAR CENTRE LIMITED,
MOOR LANE, WIDNES CHESHIRE WAB 7AL.
TEL: 0151 420 2000
FAX: 0151 495 1382

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES FOR SALE

2001 51 Sharan Sport TDi, Automotive Group	£19,500
2001 Y VW Caddy, low mileage, P.A.S., air con	£11,995
2001 Y Renault Master Diesel, 15,000 miles	£12,250
2000 W Suzuki Wagon R Liberty, 1 owner, 28,000 miles	£6,995
2000 W Dispatch Chairman, 1 owner, 6,000 miles	£13,750
2000 W Espace Hill Grau, 1 owner, 8,000 miles, air con, CD etc	£19,995
1999 V Kangoo Chairman 1.2, 1 owner, 10,000 miles	£8,250
1999 T Escort Chairman, 11,000 miles, 2 owners, P.A.S.	£9,995
1999 T Ford Courier, Universal, 22,000 miles, P.A.S.	£8,750
1998 R Courier 1.3 Auto, Universal, P.A.S., 1 owner, 6,000 miles	£7,995
1997 R Fiat Fiorino Diesel, Universal Mob, 1 owner, 30,000 miles	£5,250
1997 P Serena Diesel, Brotherwood, 1 owner, 11,000 miles, SLX	£9,995
1996 P Brotherwood Courier Diesel, P.A.S., 2 owners	£6,750
1996 P Traffic LWB, hi-top, day camper, tail lift, 19,000 miles	£9,500
1996 N Escort Universal Mobility, 2 owners, diesel, P.A.S.	£6,950
1996 N Transit, Semi Hi Roof. Tail lift, 24,000 miles	£7,495
1993 K Escort Chairman, 45,000 miles, lowering suspension	£4,995
1991 J Transit Auto Camper, Hi top, tail lift, 41,000 miles	£7,500
Kangoo & Berlingo models	Choice of 11
Traffic & Vanette Cargo models	Choice of 8

A selection of 50 WAVs from £2,750 fully serviced with warranty. Demo and delivery anywhere in UK mainland free. Part exchange and vehicles sought for purchase.

CLARKE MOBILITY 01634 243596
SNODLAND, KENT www.gfclarke.com

Accessible Vehicle Register

We specialise in locating used vehicles to suit the specific needs of our customers. If you are looking for an accessible vehicle or have one to dispose of, contact Adam Price. We also supply and install all forms of access equipment.

01202 814112
adam.price@lineone.net

COTSWOLD COTS
Build Cots and Beds for Adults and Children with Special Needs

We Design And Build Any Cot or Bed You Need.

New Products Extra Strong Playpens.
Extra Large Stairgates.
Fitted Padded Play Areas.
High Quality Fair prices
Information Phone 01993 842885

Powerchairs Mobility Consultants
New and Nearly New, Electric Wheelchairs,
3 and 4 Wheel Scooters.
All models wanted and for sale.
Ring Free anytime
0800 074 6834
All major credit cards accepted



"We care for your care"

Electric Reclining Chairs
Mobility Scooters
Stairs Lifts
Invalid Accessories
Batteries
Electric Wheelchairs



www.graveshammobility.co.uk

GRAVESHAM MOBILITY

38-40 Perry Street
North Fleet
Kent DA11 8RE
Tel: 01474 564897

SALES SERVICE HIRE

DEADLINES

April 2003 classified deadlines:
Booking: 14 March.
Copy: 18 March.

MOBILE BASE FOR autochair Milford car lift. £250. Tel: 01366 384743.

• Accommodation

MID-TERRACED HOUSE in Hemel Hempstead, wheelchair access through 3 separate entrances, freeway lift, 2 overhead hoists (in bathroom and bedroom), electric bath. Handrails situated throughout house. Separate dining room, lounge into conservatory and beautiful enclosed garden - all level access. Double glazing throughout incl brick built shed. Gch, cavity wall insulation and downstairs cloakroom, carpeted throughout. Off road parking for 2 cars. Private side entrance. Near shops, bus stops, rail station and near motorways, M1 and M25. Asking freehold £179,950. Tel: 01442 253037.

DETACHED BUNGALOW, THREE bedrooms, spacious lounge and diner, large front and rear gardens, ramps, drive, garage, lowered hob, close to sea, local amenities and park, all flat and wheelchair accessible. Tel: 01278 786772 (Burnham-on-Sea).

DISCLAIMER

DN is not responsible for claims made in the adverts it prints. Readers are advised to check claims with advertisers before relying on them.

• Recruitment (on pages 38 to 42)



Disability Coordinator

Centre for Student Affairs

The Disability Resource Centre offers assistance to disabled students and applicants including carrying out assessments of educational support needs, providing training in the use of assistive technology, giving advice on claiming funding and liaising with University faculties and external agencies to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place. You will be expected to lead and manage the staff team, take responsibility for the operation of the Disability Resource Centre and participate as a senior manager in the Centre for Student Affairs.

We are seeking an individual with experience of working with disabled students, probably in a higher education context. Alongside leadership and organisational skills, you will need to demonstrate an understanding of guidelines, legislation and support relating to disabled students. You will already have some management experience and be educated to degree level. This post is fixed term for nine months covering maternity leave. Salary in the range £25,700 - £29,600

Visit our Website to see full details and to complete an on-line application form, or telephone our 24 hour answerphone service on 0117 344 2890 to request documents by post.

Closing date for applications is 7 March 2003.

Please quote reference number: A/3823/DN.

University of the West of England, Bristol

www.uwe.ac.uk/jobs

Learning & Development Adviser

(Disability Specialist)

Salary £19,552 rising to £22,111 pa (pro rata)

'Scope Training Services' are looking to recruit 2 part-time posts (North & South) to operate as part of a national team of trainers with responsibility to deliver disability equality and awareness raising programmes to Scope staff, volunteers and service users.

You will have the opportunity to identify training needs, design and develop materials, deliver programmes across the organisation and, of course, evaluate their success.

These posts offer the opportunity of flexible home-working (17.5 hrs per week).

If you have experience about disability issues, can create enthusiasm in learners and demonstrate a commitment to best practice, please contact: Maria Frederick, Scope Training Services, 6 Market Rd, London N7 9PW for an application form.

Tel: 020 7619 7117.

Minicom: 020 7619 7163.

E-mail: maria.frederick@scope.org.uk

Application details provided in alternative formats upon request.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 10th March.

Interviews scheduled for w/c 31st March.

Scope is a national disability organisation whose focus is people with cerebral palsy. Our aim is that disabled people achieve equality.

www.scope.org.uk

Registered charity no 208231

SCOPE



Ravensbourne

College of Design and Communication

STUDENT ASSISTANT

Up to 36 hours per week during College term time
Hourly rate £8.00

Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication is a specialist University Sector College located in SE London offering a range of leading edge education and training programmes at Foundation, Undergraduate and Postgraduate level. The College is recognised as a Centre of Excellence and expertise in design, broadcasting and communications.

The College is actively encouraging students with disabilities on to its courses, and will need to build a core of student assistants as our community of specific support needs continues to grow.

We currently have one post available to provide individual, non-medical support and general assistance. If you have experience in providing support and assistance to people with disabilities, and you are interested in applying for this post or joining our register of support workers please contact the personnel department on: 020 8289 4943.

Alternatively write to:
The Personnel Department
Ravensbourne College of Design & Communication
Walden Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5SN

Tel: 020 8289 4900
Fax: 020 8325 8320
e-mail: t.personnel@rave.ac.uk
Website: www.ravensbourne.ac.uk

The closing date for completed application forms is 7 March 2003.

ESDA

The Breakout! Project seeks a disabled person as Chair for its Disabled People's Employment Strategy Steering Group



Actively empowering and supporting disabled people

- Volunteer position, travel expenses paid
- Covering the East Sussex area
- Closing date for applying-3 March

Tel: 01323 514517 or Fax 01323 514501
Or e-mail breakout@esda.org.uk for application form
East Sussex Disability Association

Registered Charity No. 1042071

Registered in England & Wales as a company limited by guarantee 2979027



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Putting people first and tailoring services to their needs

Creating access to the Built Environment

Building an Inclusive Society -

Promoting Equal Opportunities for all people in employment

You can locate our jobs bulletin on the Internet at:

www.salford.gov.uk/jobs/

Tel: 0161 909 6503

Minicom: 0161 909 6527



City of
Salford

• For Sale

PRE-OWNED & DEMONSTRATOR WAV'S FOR SALE

Mercedes Vito 108Cdi, 2001 '01, 6K miles, Orchid Green WAV, lowered floor at rear entrance with ramp.	£17,495
Fiat Ulysse 2.0EL, R reg, 50k miles. Lowered floor with ramp. Driver 3 Pass + Wheelchair, PAS, twin sunroofs, climate control & electric windows.	£8,495
VW Sharan S Tdi, 1999, V Red, 15k miles, 5 seater with lowered floor at rear & fixed ramp.	£15,195
Range of Kangoo's including ex demonstrators. All with full Lowered Floor Conversion.	Price from £7,995
Ford Courier 1.3P, 1992 K, 47k miles, lowered floor conversion.	£3,595
Ford Escort 35 1.4P, blue, 1987 E, Gowrings WAV with lowering suspension.	£3,495
Nissan Vanette 1.5P, blue, 67k miles, 1993 K WAV with 2 rear seats.	£2,995

View our web site for a larger selection of used WAV's

www.gleneaglesconversions.co.uk

95 Bonnygate, CUPAR, Fife KY15 4LG

Tel: 01334 657722, fax: 01334 657711

• **Recruitment (on pages 38 to 42)**



ARTLINK WEST YORKSHIRE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ARTS

Artlink West Yorkshire promotes access to all art forms for those with particular requirements.

Director

£23,000 to £25,000

Artlink is seeking a dynamic leader, with a minimum of five years management experience in the arts, to move the organisation forward at a crucial stage in its development. Skills in fund raising, strategic planning and business management will be needed.

Deadline for applications **28 March 2003**

For an application pack please contact:
Hayley Mason, Artlink West Yorkshire,
191 Belle Vue Road, Leeds LS3 1HG
Tel: **0113 243 1005**
email: artlink.westyorks@dial.pipex.com

Artlink West Yorkshire is an equal opportunities employer.

Thurrock Workshop Limited

106 High Street, Aveley, Essex RM15 4BX
(Providing opportunities for training and employment for Disadvantaged people)

WORKSHOP MANAGER

The Workshop is seeking to appoint a Manager to implement the modernisation plan, which engages with the "Valuing People" White Paper. The adoption of the philosophy of Independence, Choice, Rights and inclusion is at the heart of the way things are now done. You will manage a small team made up of trainers and workers who work in three areas.

A Thriving Printshop, an NVQ training unit and a Recycling Unit. The Workshop is an emerging Social Firm.

You will have experience of working with people with disabilities and be a self-starter.

This an exciting opportunity for self development, Are you ready to take on the challenge?

For an informal discussion about the above post, please contact John Williams Strategic Manager on 01708 862077. To obtain an information and application pack please write or email us on with your name and address.

We are committed to Equal Opportunities and welcomes application from all sections of the community. People with disabilities will be offered an interview where they meet all the essential criteria on the person specification.

Registered Charity Number 1035259
Company Registration Number 2773396

• **Services**



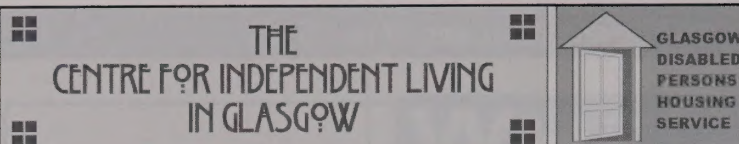
BIRKDALE PAEDIATRIC & ADULT NEURO CLINIC

Advice and treatment for babies and children.

Conditions treated are movement and learning difficulties, posture and balance, walking and balance, coordination and hand function.

Cerebral palsy, and children with neurological conditions.
Farshideh Bondarenko DIP (PHYSIO) MCSP SRP

website: www.neuro-physio.co.uk
Tel: 020 8998 9403.



Glasgow Disabled Persons Housing Service

Housing Advisor

AP4 £19,633 – £21,733 (Fixed term until June 2004)

This post is an exciting opportunity to provide rights-based housing information and advocacy to disabled people in Glasgow. The successful candidate will be highly motivated with at least 2 years experience of disability issues, the housing sector (allocation policies, adaptations etc) or the voluntary sector providing advice / information.

CILiG is committed to equal opportunities and personal experience of disability as a disabled person would be a positive advantage. CILiG premises are fully accessible to disabled people.

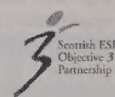
Closing date: Friday 21st March 2003.

Interviews: Friday 11th April 2003.

For an application pack please contact Linda on:

Voice: 0141 550 3522, **textphone**: 0141 554 6482, fax: 0141 550 4858, email: gdphs@cilig.co.uk or at GDPHS c/o CILiG, 117-127 Brook Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 3AP.

Post is funded by the Community Fund and the European Social Fund.



CONDITIONS

Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews (tel: 020 7619 7320), fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham (see contact details above).

DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

Equality Officer

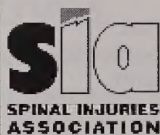
£18,000

As part of the European Year of Disability, an exciting new opportunity has arisen for a spinal cord injured person to contribute to the work of the Spinal Injuries Association.

An Equality Officer is required to deliver SIA's Equally Able Project to help address the needs of spinal cord injured people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

The Equality Officer will work with the Spinal Injuries Centres and the Peer Support Team to identify the key ethnic minority communities in each region, recruiting volunteers from these communities and forming links with relevant groups. The Equality Officer will work with the Publications Officer to produce a series of awareness – raising posters and reproduce SIA's membership leaflet in key languages. The Equality Officer will also work alongside the Helpline Team in supporting people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities facing barriers to independent living.

We would particularly welcome applications for this challenging post from spinal cord injured individuals from a Black or Minority Ethnic communities background who have an interest in equality issues.



For a Job Information Pack contact Nicola or Helen at SIA on 020 8444 2121 or email nicolaandhelen@spinali.demon.co.uk 35 hours a week, 12-month contract. Closing date for completed applications 21st March 2003.

• **Public appointments**

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence



SEN Appeals and Disability Claims: Lay members to serve on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) is an independent body whose function is to consider appeals by parents against decisions made by Local Education Authorities about children's special educational needs and also to hear claims about disability discrimination in the provision of education. The Secretary of State for Education and Skills is responsible for appointing lay members to serve on the Tribunal.

We are looking for a number of new lay members who have knowledge and experience of children with special educational needs and disabilities, preferably within a school setting. Applications are particularly welcome from people familiar with diversity issues.

Lay members will be expected to be available to hear appeals, in England only, on between 20 and 70 days

per year from 1 September 2003 and are paid on a daily fee basis.

For an application pack and further details, please send a postcard or e-mail bearing your name, address and reference "SEN" to:
Mrs Alex Daventry-Claridge, Department for Education and Skills, Level 1E, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA.

E-mail address: pba.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications is **17 March 2003.**

The Department for Education and Skills is committed to making appointments on merit by fair and open processes.

A TOUCH OF CLASS

This month, don't miss a unique opportunity to win a fabulous built-in single oven, worth £800! New from Neff, this stainless steel B1881 model will add a touch of culinary class to any kitchen. It features a clever "up-and-under" slide-away door that could be of benefit to wheelchair users (see page 33) and a revolutionary rotating handle for safer door opening. Other outstanding features include a special function for bread making, a fast heating setting for cooking food from frozen and Neff's environmentally friendly "hydro-clean" system.

To enter, complete and return the coupon printed on this page. Please note that the prize does not include fitting. More details of Neff's anniversary range can be found in a free brochure, available now. Call 08705 133090 or visit www.neff.co.uk



to enter Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send FOR FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

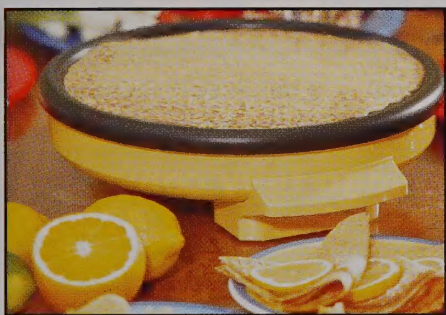
☐ Neff ☐ Tefal ☐ Oxo Good Grips



terms & conditions

• closing date for entrants: 21.03.03. • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Neff, Tefal and Oxo Good Grips. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

PANCAKE PERFECTION

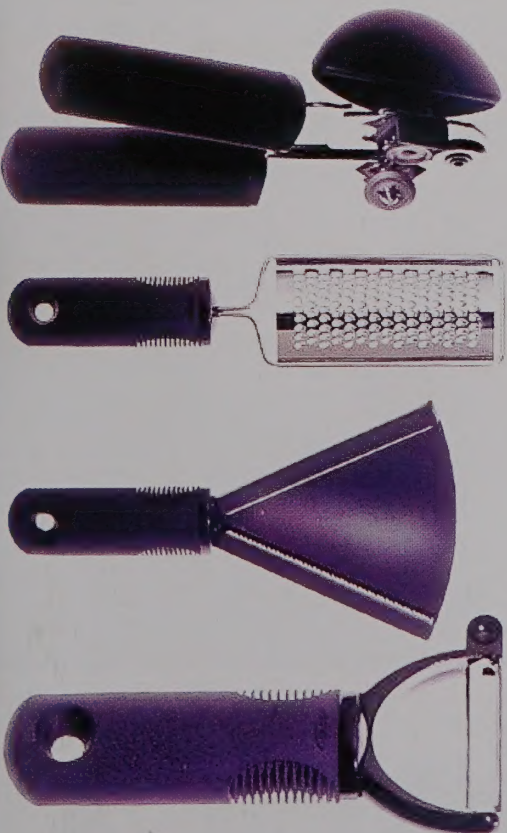


Anne Davies has already discovered the easy route to no-nonsense crepe making (see page 33) and with Pancake Day on the horizon, we thought we'd team up with Tefal to offer you the chance to win a gadget that you'll be using all year round! The Multi Crepe Maker (£29.99) will give you six perfect mini pancakes in a flash, or if you like to experiment, this is also ideal for making blinis. For making large pancakes, try out the Round Maxi Crepe Maker and Grill (£39.99). It comes with a batter spreader and wooden spatula and conveniently doubles up as a tabletop grill. Both products are non-stick and easy to use and you'll be stunned by the professional results! We have two of each product to give away this month, so put your frying pan to one side and get your entry in.

For more information of the Tefal crepe makers and your nearest stockist, tel: 0845 6021454 or visit www.tefal.co.uk

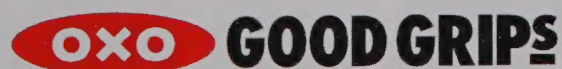


GRIPPING STUFF



They're stylish, easy to use and will be a welcome addition to any cook's kitchen. Here's your chance to snap up five of the most popular products from the Oxo Good Grips range, collectively worth over £27. Five winners will take delivery of the set, which comprises a can opener, pastry brush, jar opener, "Y" peeler and grater. All these tools are designed to make your life easier, with features such as ergonomic handles and non-slip grip. Anyone who has restricted dexterity might find that using Oxo Good Grips tools makes difficult tasks more comfortable to carry out.

For the chance to win, return the coupon to us at our Freepost address. For more information on the extensive range of Oxo Good Grips products, tel: 01282 613644 for local stockists and mail order, or visit www.jwpltd.co.uk



DN next month



Last year's Ideal Home Show: Agnes models some retro home furnishings, proving that design can be both fun and functional.

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 31 March.

WISE UP TO WORK

DN's 2003 12-page employment supplement fills in the gaps left last year: experiences and advice on starting your own business, working part-time and making a career switch, plus a look at the New Deal, Jobcentre Plus services and how the Disability Discrimination Act works for you

EARLY YEARS (2)

After diagnosis, care – what services are out there to help a new parent?

MOTORING

Mike Rogers test drives the new Nissan Micra

YOUR IDEAL HOME?

Agnes Fletcher and Adam Thomas will again be bringing you the best of this year's Ideal Home Show

And... you can find out what's been said about DN in the reader survey – and what we plan to do about it.

NEWSAGENT ORDER FORM

(Please complete and take to your newsagent)

Please reserve me a regular copy of *Disability Now* until further notice ☐

Please deliver a copy of *Disability Now* to my home address ☐

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Signature:

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The campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

DW

disabilitynow

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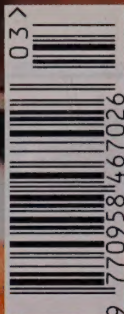
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